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ROLE OF VEC AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION SO FAR

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PREFACE

It is a universally accepted fact that education plays a significant role in the development of individuals as well as the entire society. With this in mind the Government is committed towards the attainment of the goal of Universalization of Primary Education. However, it is sad that even after 52 years of Independence and considerable investment in the field of primary education, the objective has not yet been achieved. In order to facilitate the spread of education with the help of people's participation the concept of the Village Education Committee was conceived of.

This study was taken up to find out the extent to which the VECs have been successful in performing their role efficiently or not. The findings of the study indicate towards the fact that the VECs are being constituted in accordance with the norms laid down. Moreover, the VECs have been successful in increasing enrolment rates, dropout rates have been reduced and the VEC has been able to make provision of toilets and drinking water facilities in the schools under them. However, there are some areas where extra efforts have to be made.

The study was possible only because of the interest shown by the State Institute of Educational Management and Training, Allahabad and for providing us the financial support for the conduct of the study. We are thankful to the officials of the Basic Shiksha Adhikari of Nainital and Sitapur as well as that of the DIET in both districts for the cooperation extended by them during the conduct of the study and in providing secondary information about the district. We are very thankful to our project staff comprising of Shri SK Trivedi, Shri KS Deoli, Shri BN Saraswat, Shri Deepak Singh and Shri Bhagwat Singh for their contribution in compiling and handling of primary and secondary information as well in the field survey. Last, but not least, we wish to express our thanks to Shri Manoharan K. for the very efficient handling of the rough and final drafts report on the computer.

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CHAPTER – 1

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VILLAGE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

It has been proved beyond doubt that education plays a very significant role in the development of individuals as well as the society as a whole. Since primary education serves as the very foundation for the attainment of higher education, its role becomes even more important. It is for this reason that the government is committed towards the goal of universalisation of Primary Education. The government of Uttar Pradesh has been making investments in the field of primary education since the inception of planning. Expenditure on primary education was Rs.13 crore during the First Plan and Rs.839 crore during the Eighth Plan. As a result of these expenditures the state government has been able to take positive steps in the field of primary education and some success has been achieved in increasing enrolment rates, total number of schools and number of teachers. Even the aim of setting up of one primary school within one kilometre of every village has very nearly been achieved.

Act 45 of the Indian Constitution clearly states that within 10 years of attaining Independence, provision should be made to provide compulsory education to all upto 14 years of age free of cost. Unfortunately even after 52 years of Independence and considerable investment in the field of primary education, this objective has not yet been achieved. The overall literacy rates indicated by the census of 1991 shows that in the case of UP the percentage is 41.60 and at the all India level it is 52.21. Literacy among males and females stood at 55.73 and 25.31 per cent respectively in the state while the corresponding all India figures were 64.13 and 39.29 per cent respectively.

The literacy levels in rural areas are even lower and thus the goal of attaining Universalization of Primary Education by 2000 AD as envisaged in the National Education Policy of 1986 is only a dream.

To ensure the spread of education in the state, particularly in the rural areas, it is essential to have a properly developed administrative machinery and requisite infrastructure spread over the entire state. This has been more or less achieved as a result of the regular investments made in the field of primary education. However, what is equally important is to ensure people's participation by making them aware about the significance of education. Once people become aware of the role education can play in their lives and that of their children, then the goal of achieving universalisation of Primary Education will become a reality. It was probably with this in mind that the concept of introducing education committees starting from the district level and going down to the village level was conceived of. An amendment was made in the Panchayat Raj Act with a view to decentralize the planning process and the Village Education Committee (VEC) was brought under the Panchayat Raj System to ensure decentralization even in educational planning with the help of people's participation.

The Uttar Pradesh Basic Shiksha Ordinance was passed in 1972 and amended in 1977-78 and under it the Basic Shiksha Parishad was formed to look after basic education in the state. It was decided to have three-tier education committees.

- (i) **District-level Basic Shiksha Committee comprising of ten members.**
President of Zila Parishad was to be its President and the Basic Shiksha Adhikari its Member-Secretary;
- (ii) **The Nagar Basic Shiksha Samiti to be formed for each Nagar Mahapalika, Nagar Palika Notified Area or Town Area. Even this committees were to have**

ten members. The President of this Committee is the Nagar Pramukh or the President of the Town Area or Notified Area and the Member-Secretary will be the Shiksha Adhikshak.

- (iii) **Village Education Committee (VEC).** This was to comprise of five members. The Village Pradhan to be its President, the Headmaster of the Basic School to be its Member-Secretary and 3 Members who will be selected by the Deputy Inspector of schools. These will be guardians of children enrolled in the basic school and comprise of two males and one female.

Another government order was subsequently issued on April 27, 1981 through which the formation of the Village Education Committee was enlarged to eleven members namely :

Pradhan of Gram Panchayat	President
Up-Pradhan	Member
Elected SC Member of Panchayat	Member
Elected ST Member of Panchayat	Member
Elected Female Member of the Panchayat	Member
Elected Member of the Panchayat	Member
Three Guardians of children nominated by Deputy Inspector of Schools	Member
One Member to be nominated by the Pradhan from Among Workers of Nehru Yuvak Mangal Dal/Mahila Mandal/NGO	Member
Headmaster of the Basic School	Member Secretary

Then again on 15.5.1993 another government order was passed and this restores the VEC members to the five as indicated earlier. This was again altered on 13.9.1994 and presently the VEC has 12 members. The members are the same as indicated in the GO of 1981 with the change that the additional member would be the parent of a handicapped student. In this way the VEC structure has been altered over

the years and it has been either a five members committee or a 11-12 member one. Over the years the VECs have also been given a greater role to play in the education system of the village with a view to bringing about qualitative changes in education.

The main functions and responsibilities of the VEC are as follows:

- (1) To ensure 100 per cent enrolment of children in the school going age group 6-11 years;
- (2) In case children in 6-11 years age group are not going to a regular school they should be sent to some non-formal education centre;
- (3) To ensure that dropout rates are minimised by assuring retention;
- (4) To ensure proper use of maths and science kits provided under the Operation Blackboard scheme;
- (5) To have special focus on SC/ST and OBC children and the girl child;
- (6) To ensure that schools open and close on time and that students are kept busy in teaching and other activities;
- (7) To maintain the school building and keep the campus clean;
- (8) To construct new buildings and toilets and provide drinking water in schools where such facilities do not exist;
- (9) To ensure that teachers are punctual and teach regularly;
- (10) To monitor attendance of the children on a monthly basis;
- (11) To create awareness among the local people about the significance of education;
- (12) To raise funds for providing different facilities in school besides the funds available from the State Government;
- (13) To make people aware about the scholarships and other facilities available to different categories of children and provide help in obtaining them;
- (14) To advise the District Basic Shiksha Samiti regarding ways and means to bring about an improvement in the buildings and other assets of the school;
- (15) To obtain the co-operation of teachers, guardians, BDOs, health workers, Aanganwadi workers, Yuvak Mandal Dal and Mahila Mandal members in achieving the goal of education for all;
- (16) To make teaching more interesting by organizing national festivals, education camps, local festivals and cultural programmes;

- (17) To get the children regularly checked up from the locally available health officials and doctors;
- (18) To bring about awareness among the people by removing their superstitions and the existing mal-practices in the society.

It is envisaged that the VEC will hold its meetings once every month. In order to ensure that the VEC members are fully aware of their role and responsibilities they are provided training for a three-day period during which they are also made aware of the syllabus and activities other than teaching. They are also made aware about Micro-planning. Micro planning has two crucial elements:

- (a) **Village Based Planning** : This requires the involvement of the community in mobilizing people to enroll all children for the Universalization of Education and provide support to the school in financial and non-financial ways;
- (b) **School Based Planning** : This aims at making the school function effectively.

In the process of micro planning one has to look at the various grass-root institutional arrangements such as the VEC, etc. and their capacity building is essential to obtain optimal results. In UP micro planning has been initiated in all the 15 DPEP and 12 BEP districts since August 1998 and it was expected to be completed by February 1999. The VEC, primary school teachers and Nehru Yuva Kendra workers were involved in micro planning.

The VEC is also expected to draw up Village Education Plans after realizing problems, priorities and the educational needs of the village such as requirements of teachers, need for parent motivation and supervision of pedagogical aspects.

Yet another role to be played by the VEC is school mapping. The concept of school mapping is one where the existing situation of primary education in a village is

depicted through a map. With the help of this map a clear idea can be had about total number of persons and families, the number of children in school going age group and those actually going to school, the number of educational institutions such as primary schools, junior high schools, non-formal educational institutions and infrastructure in the village such as bank, post office, etc. The advantage of school mapping is that it gives a very clear picture about the geographical location of the village and of the educational situation.

In this way the planners and policy makers made an effort to give powers and responsibilities to the Village Education Committee in order to ensure that they are able to gain the confidence of the village community in achieving hundred per cent enrolment and retention, ensure proper and regular teaching through the provision of requisite infrastructure and thereby attain the ultimate goal of Universalization of Primary Education.

The general impression that one has is that by and large the VECs are not held regularly. Even when they are held only mundane matters such as finances are taken care of and nothing is actually been done to bring about qualitative improvements in the level of education as such. It is, therefore, necessary that studies should be conducted to see how effectively the VECs have been involved in the education process and the extent to which they have succeeded in achieving the objectives for which they have basically been constituted. It is for this reason that the Gird Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, proposed to undertake an evaluation of the Village Education Committees to find out the extent to which they have achieved their objectives and identify the problems which have hampered their success. The broad objectives of the study are as follows:

- (a) To find out whether the VECs have been constituted as per the norms provided;
- (b) To study the extent to which VECs have been able to enlist the cooperation of the local community;
- (c) To study the role of the VECs in educational development of the Villages (Enrolment/Retention/Accessibility);
- (d) To study the role of the VECs in motivating the community in the opening and construction of new schools;
- (e) To study the interface between parents, teachers and the VEC functionaries; and.
- (f) To suggest policy implications in the light of the relationship between the VECs and functioning of the schools.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DESIGN

It was proposed to undertake the study in two UPBEP districts of Uttar Pradesh. The selection criteria for district identification were the level of literacy obtained in the Census of 1991. For survey it was decided to take one high and the other low literacy level district. Accordingly the districts which were selected were Nainital and Sitapur since they represent the highest and lowest literacy level districts among the UPBEP districts of the state. From each of the two districts it was decided to take up two blocks. These were selected with the help of the officials in the office of the Basic Shiksha Adhikari and the DIET. As far as possible one block was to be a remote one and the other close to the district headquarter and also having active VECs. The blocks which were suggested to us were Bhimtal and Haldwani from Nainital and Hargaon and Leharpur in Sitapur.

From each block 15 VECs were selected with the help of the respective ABSAs incharge of inspection of the Basic Schools in the selected blocks. The criteria adopted in selecting VECs was that only efficient VECs were selected and once again care was

taken to select remote villages as well along with villages near the block so as to give proper representation to the entire block. In this way a total of 60 VECs were selected and surveyed from the four blocks of districts Nainital and Sitapur.

In order to collect primary information it was decided to survey four different categories of persons and for each category a separate interview schedule was prepared. These schedules were provided by the State Institute for Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT), Allahabad in order to ensure that all the research organizations conducting a study on the same topic, but in different districts of UP, should have a common schedule. The four different schedules were drawn up to collect information from the following categories of persons:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| (a) VEC Members | Four from each VEC |
| (b) Teachers | Two from each basic school |
| (c) Parents of children enrolled in the Basic School | Two from each village |
| (d) Community leaders in the Village | Two from each village |

To make the sample purposive the persons to be surveyed from each category were also identified. Thus, from among the VEC members we chose the Pradhan, the Headmaster, a female member and one VEC member who belonged to the SC/ST or OBC group. In the case of teachers we have tried to select one male and one female teacher from each school as far as possible. As far as the parents are concerned, care was taken to select one from the general category and the other belonging to SC/ST or OBC category. At the time of selection of the community leaders the selection was made from either the members of the Block Development Committee, an individual who has served as a Pradhan earlier, the person who lost in the election for Gram Pradhan or any other influential person residing in the village. In this way the total sample we covered from the 60 VECs surveyed was as follows:

(a)	VEC Member	240
(b)	Teachers	120
(c)	Parents	120
(d)	Community Leaders	120
	Total Sample	600

Besides the primary information we have also collected some secondary information from the selected districts so as to have an idea of the situation of primary education as existing in the selected districts. It is unfortunate that the offices of the BSA do not have a proper record of the secondary information and from neither of the two districts have we been successful in obtaining information regarding enrolment rates and drop out rates on a year-wise basis. In fact even the break-up of the male and female teachers on a block-wise basis was not available. Since a proper database is the very criterion on which a situation can be assessed and plans and policies drawn up for the future, it is essential that these statistics should be well maintained and easily available whenever the need arises. We are, therefore, presenting only that secondary information which we could obtain from the two districts.

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE SELECTED DISTRICTS AND BLOCKS

District Nainital comprises of a total of eight blocks out of which those which form a part of our sample are Bhimtal and Haldwani. Table 1.1 provides secondary information related to the number of primary and junior basic schools and the number of students enrolled in each category as well as the number of teachers. This information is being given on a block-wise basis for the years 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

It is quite evident from Table 1.1 that the number of primary schools in the district went up from 757 in 1997-98 to 816 in 1999-2000 registering a growth of around 8 per cent. However, the maximum increase has been between 1997-98 and 1998-99. In 1999-2000 only one additional primary school was established in Haldwani block of the district. The total enrolment in primary schools registered an increase of around 10 per cent between 1997-98 and 1999-2000. This goes to show that the growth of primary schools and that of enrolment has been similar. However during the same period the growth in the number of teachers has been negligible. In fact the strength of teachers of the primary schools went up from 1668 in 1997-98 to 1671 in the year 1999-2000. In as many as five out of the eight blocks of the district the number of primary teachers have actually gone down in 1999-2000 as compared to 1997-98. Our selected blocks are among the five blocks where the strength of primary teachers has gone down.

On the basis of the strength of students and the teachers the teacher-student ratio has been worked out. The teacher-student ratio for the district as a whole was 31 during 1997-98 and went up marginally to 34 by 1999-2000. The prescribed norm is that of 40 students per teacher and so the district has a favourable ratio. The lowest number of students per teacher was found in Bhimtal block (18 and 22 during 1997-98 and 1999-2000 respectively). The block having the highest figure was Ramnagar block where the ratio was above the prescribed norm. When we look at the second block selected by us it is observed that the ratio was quite good during the year 1997-98 but has suddenly worsened to 42 students per teacher by 1999-2000. This is primarily so because while the strength of teachers declined from 338 to 325 the enrolment of students went up from 9939 to 13717 between 1997-98 and 1999-2000.

Table 1.1 : Year-wise Details of Schools, Students and Teachers in Nainital

Details of Schools, Students and Teachers	Name of Block								
	Hald- wani	Betal Ghat	Okhal Kanda	Kota Bagh	Bhim- tal	Dhari	Ram- garh	Ram- nagar	Total
No. of Primary Schools									
1997-98	91	112	127	74	105	74	90	84	757
1998-99	96	120	138	80	114	80	98	89	815
1999-2000	97	120	138	80	114	80	98	89	816
No. of Jr. Basic Schools									
1997-98	23	26	32	21	31	18	24	25	200
1998-99	28	29	40	23	32	21	27	29	229
No. of Teachers (Primary)									
1997-98	338	201	212	168	233	145	171	200	1668
1998-99	340	220	199	167	227	137	174	205	1669
1999-2000	325	221	207	179	223	136	169	211	1671
No. of Teachers (JBS)									
1997-98	115	80	118	80	149	62	96	125	825
1998-99	139	126	122	81	140	68	97	132	905
No. of Students (Primary)									
1997-98	9939	5252	6074	6366	4290	4433	5266	9831	51451
1998-99	19123	4974	6676	5337	8173	3899	4743	9858	62783
1999-2000	13717	5510	6895	6511	4919	4382	4629	8953	56516
No. of Students (JBS)									
1997-98	6595	1564	1784	1519	2132	994	1638	2356	18582
1998-99	8847	1675	2708	1538	3084	900	1605	2140	22497
Teachers-Students Ratio (primary)									
1997-98	29	24	29	38	18	30	31	49	31
1998-99	56	23	34	32	36	28	27	48	38
1999-2000	42	25	33	36	22	32	27	42	34
Teachers-Students Ratio (JBS)									
1997-98	57	20	15	19	14	16	17	19	23
1998-99	63	13	22	19	22	13	20	16	25
No. of VEC	67	59	68	40	49	34	54	77	440

As far as information related to the junior basic schools is concerned we could obtain block-wise data for only two years from the office of Basic Shiksha Adhikari. Consequently the data presented rates to the years 1997-98 and 1998-99. Between the two years the number of junior basic schools increased by 14.5 per cent and the corresponding increase in the number of students was of around 21 per cent. Even at the level of the junior basic schools the overall teacher-student ratio was very low at 23 and 25 for the two years and was therefore much below the prescribed norm. However,

Table 1.2 : Year-wise Details of Primary Schools, Students and Teachers in Sitapur

Name of Block	No. of School			No. of Teachers			No. of Students			Students-Teacher Ratio		
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
1. Khairabad	111	114	114	319	292	278	22027	22379	23576	69	77	85
2. Ailia	118	121	121	269	257	246	19740	20833	21344	73	81	87
3. Parsendi	110	113	113	253	253	228	19712	19968	21768	78	79	95
4. Hargaon	117	120	120	184	176	163	22234	24016	26634	121	136	163
5. Mishrikh	113	115	115	191	167	175	19148	19097	19567	100	114	112
6. Pisawan	127	131	131	220	209	196	21934	22978	24898	100	110	127
7. Maholi	97	102	102	242	216	207	17218	17626	18279	71	82	88
8. Machrehta	110	113	113	187	171	187	19517	18540	18994	104	108	102
9. Godalamau	119	123	123	194	123	169	22174	22632	22760	114	184	135
10. Sidhauri	109	112	112	260	243	239	18677	20474	22253	72	84	93
11. Kasmanda	103	106	106	188	171	172	19292	19510	20096	103	114	117
12. Mahmoodabad	101	104	104	164	161	156	15547	16530	17064	95	103	109
13. Rampur Mathura	105	108	108	101	124	85	14343	15940	11834	142	129	139
14. Pahala	102	105	105	151	153	148	16191	17565	18734	107	115	127
15. Biswan	143	146	146	271	275	249	25940	26674	27116	96	97	109
16. Reosa	96	99	99	114	113	92	18505	20897	21984	162	185	239
17. Sakaran	115	118	118	122	137	131	13375	14773	14548	110	108	111
18. Leharpur	99	103	103	180	182	185	17507	17778	17965	97	98	97
19. Behta	108	111	111	130	126	130	16558	18800	18300	127	149	141
Total	2103	2164	2164	3740	4086	3436	359639	377010	387714	96	92	113

Table 1.2(Contd.) : Year-wise Details of Jr. Basic Schools, Students and Teachers in Sitapur

Name of Block	No. of School			No. of Teachers			No. of Students			Students-Teacher Ratio			No. of VEC
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	
1. Khairabad	33	33	34	126	126	150	6339	2889	3367	50	23	22	66
2. Ailia	26	26	27	94	94	113	4502	2244	2414	48	24	21	74
3. Parsendi	20	22	22	110	110	110	2705	1548	2815	25	14	26	70
4. Hargaon	23	25	25	74	74	89	5666	1592	2759	77	22	31	60
5. Mishrikh	20	22	22	83	83	91	5390	1457	1443	65	18	16	62
6. Pisawan	23	24	24	72	72	87	3083	2716	3051	43	38	35	88
7. Maholi	22	24	24	95	95	95	5009	1572	1799	53	17	19	58
8. Machrehta	18	21	21	69	69	85	4018	1497	1877	58	22	22	61
9. Godalamau	19	21	22	71	71	71	5663	1587	1804	80	22	25	74
10. Sidhauri	18	18	18	73	73	73	4719	941	726	65	13	10	72
11. Kasmanda	20	20	20	59	59	67	3056	1145	1289	52	19	19	67
12. Mahmoodabad	23	23	23	48	48	64	2482	1468	1737	52	31	27	65
13. Rampur Mathura	16	16	16	30	30	29	2831	917	1046	94	31	36	65
14. Pahala	15	15	15	31	31	36	4935	772	1000	159	25	28	72
15. Biswan	25	24	24	78	78	104	3667	1770	2251	47	23	22	44
16. Reosa	18	18	18	26	26	27	4302	1129	1241	165	43	46	76
17. Sakaran	22	22	22	38	38	45	2854	998	1209	75	26	27	63
18. Leharpur	16	18	19	55	55	55	3275	1681	1681	60	31	31	86+4
19. Behta	22	23	23	37	37	50	3022	1069	1135	82	29	23	77
Total	399	416	419	1269	1269	1441	77818	28992	34844	61	23	24	1719

the ratio was high as compared to the norm in the case of Haldwani block in both the years. Bhimtal on the other hand had a favourable teacher-student ratio in both years despite the fact that the number of students per teacher have gone up within one year.

The total number of VECs functioning in the district as a whole was 440. Bhimtal and Haldwani each had 49 and 67 VECs respectively. Ramnagar had the highest number of VECs (77) among the different blocks of Nainital.

The figures related to number of schools etc. in the case of Sitapur are presented in Table 1.2. Sitapur is a bigger district as compared to Nainital and has a total of 19 blocks. As was observed in the case of Nainital, even in Sitapur the total number of primary schools showed a considerable increase between 1997-98 and 1998-99 and this increase works out to be approximately 3 per cent. Over the next year however there was no change in the total number of primary schools. In the case of Hargaon and Leharpur, our selected blocks the total number of primary schools went up from 117 to 120 and from 99 to 103 respectively during the two years. While the number of schools increased by around 3 per cent between 1997-98 and 1999-2000, the enrolment figures registered an increase of almost eight per cent. Even in the case of Sitapur it is observed that the teacher strength in primary schools went up between 1997-98 and 1998-99 by about 9 per cent but by the very next year (1999-2000) there had been a considerable decrease by almost 16 per cent. In fact, out of the 19 blocks only two blocks namely Sakaran and Leharpur had a slightly higher number of primary teachers in 1999-2000 as compared to 1997-98. Since teacher strength went down and enrolment of children went up, this had a negative impact on the teacher student ratio. As it is this ratio was adverse even in 1997-98 being 96:1 which is very poor as compared to the prescribed norm of 40:1. By 1999-2000 it had gone up to 113 students per teacher.

Table 1.3 : Year-wise Details of Teachers, Students and Teacher-Students Ratio for our Selected Blocks

Particulars	Blocks			
	Bhimtal	Haldwani	Hargaon	Leharpur
PRIMARY SCHOOL				
<u>No. of Teachers</u>				
1997-98	233	338	178	182
1998-99	227	340	163	185
1999-2000	223	325	163	185
<u>No. of Students</u>				
1997-98	4290	9939	22406	17337
1998-99	8173	19123	24057	20162
1999-2000	4420	11608	26634	17965
<u>Teacher-Students Ratio</u>				
1997-98	23	29	126	95
1998-99	26	56	148	109
1999-2000	20	36	163	97
JUNIOR BASIC SCHOOL				
<u>No. of Teachers</u>				
1997-98	149	115	74	55
1998-99	140	139	74	55
1999-2000	140	139	89	55
<u>No. of Students</u>				
1997-98	2132	6595	2142	3275
1998-99	3084	8847	2317	1681
1999-2000	1472	3877	2759	1681
<u>Teacher-Students Ratio</u>				
1997-98	14	57	29	60
1998-99	22	64	31	31
1999-2000	11	28	31	31

Source : BRC Centre and BSA Office

There were 419 junior basic schools all over the district during 1999-2000 as compared to 399 in 1997-98. Which shows an increase of around 5 per cent. The teacher strength remained static between 1997-98 and 1998-99 but showed an increase of around 13.5 per cent between 1998-99 and 1999-2000. Strangely enough the strength of children enrolled in the junior basic schools shows a drastic decline. In 1997-98 enrolment figures were 77518 and by 1999-2000 they were reduced to 34644. No explanation was given as to the possible reasons which have led to this decline.

Since the data has been obtained from the office of the Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Sitapur, they are being presented by us but we believe that proper records are not being maintained. As a result of this sharp decline in student strength the adverse teacher student ratio of 61 students per teacher during 1997-98 has suddenly become very favourable in 1999-2000 at 24 students per teacher.

In the district as a whole there were a total of 1719 Village Education Committees. Their number in our selected blocks of Hargaon and Leharpur was 60 and 86 respectively.

We have also collected some secondary information from the four selected blocks as well, and it was observed that there is some discrepancy between the data obtained at the district headquarter and from the individual blocks. Table 1.3 is providing block-wise information about the total number of teachers, students at the primary and junior basic levels for three years and on the basis of this data the teacher-student ratios have been calculated. However, when we compare the data provided to us at the block level and at the district level there are some discrepancies, which are being indicated below.

	Block	Date from BSA Office	Data from Block
Student Strength (Primary)			
1997-98	Hargaon	22234	22406
	Leharpur	17505	17337
1998-99	Hargaon	24016	24057
	Leharpur	17778	20162
1999-2000	Bhimtal	4919	4420
	Haldwani	13717	11608
Teacher Strength (Primary)			
1997-98	Hargaon	184	178
	Leharpur	180	182
1998-99	Hargaon	176	163
	Leharpur	182	185
Student Strength (Junior Basic)			
1997-98	Hargaon	5666	2142
1998-99	Hargaon	1592	2317

As a result of these discrepancies even the teacher-student ratios worked out have been different.

The Bal Gadna which is regularly conducted by the Primary Schools provides information about the total number of children in the 6-11 years age group and the 11-14 years age group. These are the two target groups of children for enrolment to the primary level and the junior basic level. The Bal Gadna also has details of the actual number of children who are enrolled in the primary and junior basic schools. The percentage of students enrolled out of the actual population of children is the enrolment rate. In Tables 1.4 and 1.5 we have provided the details of the Bal Gadna registers of the selected blocks for the Primary and Junior Basic Schools separately and have worked out the enrolment rates at both levels.

Table 1.4 : Block-wise Details From the Balgadna about the Primary School Children, 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000

Particulars	Blocks			
	Bhimtal	Haldwani	Hargaon	Leharpur
1997-98				
Total Children in the 6-11 years age group	3029	9133	2719	8821
No. of 6-11 years age group children who are enrolled	2132	6595	2142	NA
No. of those children in 6-11 years age group not enrolled	897	2538	577	NA
Enrolment Rate	70.4	72.2	78.8	--
1998-99				
Total Children in the 6-11 years age group	3130	9002	2611	9063
No. of 6-11 years age group children who are enrolled	3080	8847	2317	NA
No. of those children in 6-11 years age group not enrolled	46	155	294	NA
Enrolment Rate	98.5	98.5	88.7	--
1999-2000				
Total Children in the 6-11 years age group	3176	10993	11321	9969
No. of 6-11 years age group children who are enrolled	3144	10840	5229	NA
No. of those children in 6-11 years age group not enrolled	32	153	6092	NA
Enrolment Rate	98.9	98.6	46.2	--

Source : Bal Gadna Registers in the block and district headquarters

Table 1.5 : Block-wise Details From the Balgadna about the Junior Basic School Children, 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000

Particulars	Blocks			
	Bhimtal	Haldwani	Hargaon	Leharpur
1997-98				
Total Children in the 6-11 years age group	6905	19862	24719	23179
No. of 6-11 years age group children who are enrolled	4290	9939	22406	17337
No. of those children in 6-11 years age group not enrolled	2715	9923	2313	5842
Enrolment Rate	62.1	50.0	90.7	74.8
1998-99				
Total Children in the 6-11 years age group	8200	19363	27906	25188
No. of 6-11 years age group children who are enrolled	8173	19123	24057	20162
No. of those children in 6-11 years age group not enrolled	27	240	3849	5026
Enrolment Rate	99.7	98.8	86.2	80.0
1999-2000				
Total Children in the 6-11 years age group	6067	19129	31843	27812
No. of 6-11 years age group children who are enrolled	6053	18915	29634	22288
No. of those children in 6-11 years age group not enrolled	14	214	2209	5524
Enrolment Rate	99.8	98.9	93.0	80.1

Source : Bal Gadna Registers in the block and district headquarters

With the help of Table 1.4 we can have a clear picture regarding the enrolment rates in each of our four selected blocks over a three years period. It is quite evident from the table that enrolment rates are higher in Nainital district as compared to Sitapur. However, there is seems to be some problem in the figures we have received from the Bal Gadna of Bhimtal and Haldwani blocks for the year 1997-98. It is a known fact that enrolment rates are higher for the hill districts as compared to the plains of Uttar Pradesh. But in the case of Bhimtal and Haldwani the rates work out to be 62.1 and

50.0 per cent respectively in 1997-98 and then in the next two years they are close to 100 per cent in Bhimtal and close to 99 per cent in Haldwani blocks. Among the two blocks of Sitapur, Hargaon has a higher enrolment rate of around 90 per cent or more while that in Leharpur is only around 80 per cent.

Enrolment rates at the level of the Junior Basic School is depicted in Table 1.5. The basic problem with the Bal Gadna of the two blocks of Nainital for the year 1997-98 continue to pose a problem once again as enrolment rates work out to be around 70 per cent in each block. They then jump to over 98 per cent in the next two years.

As far as the two blocks of Sitapur are concerned, the Bal Gadna of Leharpur only mentions the total number of children in the age group 11-14 years and not those who are actually enrolled. Thus we could not calculate the enrolment rates for Leharpur. In Hargaon enrolment rate went up from around 79 per cent in 1997-98 to nearly 89 per cent in the very next year. It then slumped to around 46 per cent during 1999-2000. Once again it is difficult to believe that in just one year the number of children in the age group suddenly jumped from 2611 (1998-99) to 11321 (1999-2000).

We also made an effort to collect information about the dropout rates in the two districts. Unfortunately, it seemed that the officials are not familiar with the concept of dropout rate. Only in the case of Nainital district we have been able to get the dropout rate of the children who were enrolled in 1994 in Class I and continued to go upto Class V in 1998. This information was given on a year-wise basis from 1994 to 1998. As far as the boys are concerned the dropout rate worked out to be around 15.35 per cent and that among the girls worked out to be around 20.54 per cent. The overall dropout taking both girls and boys together was found to be around 17.5 per cent. This rate of dropout is below the overall dropout rate of the state as a whole.

In the case of Sitapur as a whole or for either of the 4 blocks covered by us such information is not available with us. They have only provided us information about the number of children admitted to Class I in a year and those who left in between for one reason or the other. We are, therefore, unable to present the information.

Although it has already been pointed out that availability of data has posed a serious problem to us during the course of our study, some of the data, which was even provided is such that its authenticity remains in doubt. There is also discrepancy between the same information supplied by the block and district level offices. The very base of proper planning is a set of reliable data on a time series basis. The achievements of the past serve as the bench-mark on which policies are formulated and targets set for the future. But if the very availability of data is either lacking or is not correct then the very exercise of planning can be jeopardized. We would, therefore, once again like to stress on the fact that there is an urgent need to ensure that data from the different blocks should be compiled and maintained properly such that they can be easily available to the planners, policy makers as well as researchers.

CHAPTER – 2

PROFILE OF THE VEC MEMBERS AND THEIR PERCEPTION

As has already been indicated earlier, our study is based on the analysis of the primary information collected by us from different categories of individuals in the village. Since the study relates to the functioning of the VECs our largest sample of respondents are the VEC members themselves. From each of the 60 VECs selected by us we have drawn a purposive sample constituting of four VEC members viz. the Pradhan - who is the Chairman of the VEC, the Headmaster - who is its Member-Secretary, one member belonging to the SC, ST or OBC category and a female member of the VEC. This chapter is, therefore, based on the survey conducted by us of 240 VEC members.

BACKGROUND OF THE VEC MEMBERS

We have deliberately selected females in our sample because it is a well-known fact that if a household has a housewife who is educated or has a proper vision then she ensures that her children receive proper education and medical care, etc. Thus, while we have deliberately selected one female from among the VEC members, our actual sample is over 25 per cent since some females also became part of our sample by virtue of the fact that they were the Village Pradhans. Under the new Panchayati Raj Act, one-third of the total seats are reserved for females. In this way out of the sample of 240 VEC members as many as 96 (40 per cent) were females. Similarly we also took at least one VEC member who belonged to SC, ST or OBC category and our final

sample constituted of 47.5 per cent individuals belonging to these three categories in the two districts taken together (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 : Background of VEC Members

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
Total Number	60	60	120	60	60	120	240
<u>Sex</u>							
Male	40	30	70	36	38	74	144
Female	20	30	50	24	22	46	96
<u>Caste</u>							
General	40	42	82	16	11	27	109
SC/ST	19	18	37	18	18	36	73
OBC	1	--	1	16	24	40	41
Others	--	--	--	10	7	17	17
<u>Educational Level</u>							
Illiterate	3	4	7	11	12	23	30
Literate (W/S)	1	2	3	3	4	7	10
Primary	10	6	16	7	11	18	34
Jr. High School	7	5	12	6	6	12	24
Intermediate	28	27	55	18	15	33	88
Graduate & Above	11	16	27	15	12	27	54

When we look at the districts separately, it is observed that in Nainital the females constituted around 42 per cent of the sample. Their proportions in the two blocks stood at 33.33 and 50 per cent in Bhimtal and Haldwani blocks respectively. Looking at the SC, ST and OBC categories the percentage in the case of Nainital district as a whole stood at around 31 per cent and it was 33.33 and 30 per cent respectively in the blocks of Bhimtal and Haldwani.

Similarly, in Sitapur district as a whole the share of females worked out to be around 38 per cent. The corresponding figures at the block level were 40 and 36.67 per cent in the case of Hargaon and Leharpur blocks respectively. The percentage of respondents belonging to the disadvantaged categories was high at around 63 per cent in Sitapur district as a whole as well as in the two blocks of Hargaon (57 per cent) and Leharpur (70 per cent) (Table 2.1).

In the case of Nainital district we had no respondent whom was a Muslim. However, we did have a few (around 14 per cent) in the case of Sitapur.

When we look at the educational level of the VEC members it was found that around 12.5 per cent were illiterates and another 4 per cent could read and write but had no formal education. Thus, nearly 17 per cent of the total sample had no educational qualifications. However, nearly 37 per cent had educational qualification upto the Intermediate level and another 22.5 per cent were graduates or post-graduates. In this way, the percentage of those having educational qualification of Intermediate or above accounted for almost 60 per cent of the total sample covered by us. The remaining respondents had received education upto primary level or upto Class VIII (Table 2.1).

At the level of the two districts individually a striking difference was observed between Nainital and Sitapur. In Nainital the total percentage of illiterate VEC members was only 6 per cent whereas the corresponding percentage in the case of Sitapur was around 19 per cent. The relatively high level of illiteracy is quite evident in the two selected blocks of the two districts. This is quite understandable because we have deliberately selected the highest and the lowest literacy districts for our survey. However, the number of VEC members having educational qualifications of

Intermediate and graduation and above was 27.5 and 22.5 per cent respectively in Sitapur and this goes to show that despite the fact that the district may be having a lower overall literacy level, the share of educationally well qualified among the literates is not very low. Even in the case of Nainital only 22.5 per cent VEC members were graduates or above. But the proportion of those having studied upto Intermediate was nearly 46 per cent (Table 2.1).

In Table 2.2 we have shown the occupational distribution of the VEC members and their income levels. Those having agriculture as their primary occupation accounted for slightly over half the total sample (51.67 per cent). This is quite natural because the survey is rural based and agriculture continues to dominate the occupational pattern of rural areas. However, when we look at the two districts separately, those dependent on agriculture were in a higher proportion in Sitapur (around 59 per cent) as compared to Nainital (around 47.5 per cent).

The second most important occupation was the service sector and this accounted for around 28.5 per cent of the total respondents. As can be expected, Nainital had a higher proportion of VEC members having service as their primary occupation (33.33 per cent) as compared to Sitapur (around 24 per cent). The only other occupation having a sizeable number of respondents were the self-employed persons who accounted for around 12 per cent of the total sample as well as in each of the two selected districts of our study (Table 2.2).

When we look at the income levels of the households of the VEC members it is observed that around 13 per cent were rather poor and had an annual income of below Rs.12,000 and another 17 per cent had an annual income ranging between Rs.12,000 to Rs.24,000. Thus, if we take these two categories together around 30 per cent of the

total sample have an annual income of below Rs.24,000. Between the two districts, Sitapur had a relatively higher proportion of VEC members from the economically weaker group since around 17 per cent had income below Rs.12,000 per annum and another 21 per cent between Rs.12,000 to Rs.24,000. As against this the corresponding percentage of respondents in these two low-income categories in Nainital district was around 9 and 12 per cent respectively. However, in both the districts there was a similar proportion of members whose annual income was in excess of Rs.50,000. Among the different blocks of each district there was not much of a variation (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 : Occupation and Income Level of VEC Members

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Occupation Group</u>							
Agriculture	23	34	57	34	33	67	124
Service	21	19	40	14	15	29	69
Self-Employed	10	5	15	6	8	14	29
Labour	4	1	5	6	3	9	14
Others	2	1	3	--	1	1	4
<u>Income Group</u> (Rs. per annum)							
Below 12,000	5	6	11	11	9	20	31
12000 – 24000	8	7	15	9	16	25	40
24001 – 36000	14	13	27	11	7	18	45
36001 – 49000	8	3	11	3	1	4	15
49001 – 75000	8	20	28	23	--	33	61
75000 and above	17	11	28	3	17	20	48
Average Income	50,402	49,167	49,784	40,488	48,552	44,520	47,152

Taking the entire sample of the VEC members as a whole the average yearly household income worked out to be Rs.47,152. As can be expected, the average household income was higher in Nainital (Rs.49,784) as compared to Sitapur (Rs.44,520). Among the four selected blocks the highest average household income was recorded in Bhimtal (Rs.50,402) and the lowest was found in the case of Leharpur (Rs.40,488) (Table 2.2).

FORMATION OF THE VEC AND ITS WORKING

We enquired from the VEC members about the procedure adopted in the formation of the VEC, how the members were elected and the year of their election. This information is provided in Table 2.3. Every VEC member has reported that the VECs have been constituted according to the rules which have clearly been laid down. Around 35 per cent have reported that the VEC is constituted in accordance to a Government Order while the rest have stated that it was the Pradhan who called a meeting of the Panchayat and elected the members exercising his powers as the Chairman of the VEC. Out of our sample of four individuals from each VEC the Pradhan and the Headmaster get automatically selected as the Chairman and Member-Secretary of the VEC. Thus, half of our sample comprises of these two categories of individuals. The other two are elected from among the women members in the Panchayat and the SC, ST and OBC members representing the Panchayat or are nominated by the Pradhan or Deputy Inspector of Schools. Out of the 120 such members in our sample around 57.5 per cent were Panchayat Members and the rest were nominated members of the VEC. When we look at the two districts separately, the proportion of Panchayat members was slightly higher in Nainital (around 62 per cent) as compared to Sitapur (around 53 per cent). Nearly two-thirds of the total VEC members

in our sample became members of the VEC in 1995 or 1996. The rest in 1997 or later. When we look at the two districts separately it is observed that there was a much higher proportion of those VEC members who have been serving the committee since 1995-96 (approximately 81 per cent) in the case of Sitapur as compared to Nainital (approximately 57 per cent) (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 : Details about VEC From Its Members

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>How was the VEC constituted</u>							
Official G.O.	19	18	37	29	19	48	85
Proper Meeting of Pradhan	41	42	83	31	41	72	155
<u>According to the Rules</u>							
Yes	60	60	120	60	60	120	240
No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>How were you Elected</u>							
Because of Panchayat Member	21	16	37	15	17	32	69
Nominated	9	14	23	15	13	28	51
Ex-Officio Member	30	30	60	30	30	60	120
<u>Year of Selection</u>							
1995 or 1996	14	54	68	44	53	97	165
1997 or After	46	6	52	16	7	23	75

Information related to the objectives of the VEC and the regularity with which VEC meetings are held are shown in Table 2.4. As far as the objectives of the VECs is concerned, the respondents have mainly highlighted four functions and so there have been multiple responses. The two most important objectives cited are development and spread of education and taking care of the basic schools under the VEC. Out of the

total respondents around 62.5 and 54.6 per cent respectively have identified these two objectives. The other objectives which have been mentioned, although by a lower number of respondents are the objectives of increasing enrolment and retention, and removing the various problems faced by the basic school. In the case of Nainital the most important objective is development and spread of education as reported by two-thirds of the respondents. In Sitapur, however, both objectives, i.e. development of education and taking care of the schools are both equally important since almost an equal number of respondents have identified these objectives.

Table 2.4 : Details About VEC From Its Members

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Objective of the VEC</u>							
Development & spread of education	46	34	80	32	38	70	150
Care of School	23	32	50	31	45	67	131
Increase Enrolment & Retention	15	13	28	6	22	28	56
Remove Problems of School	3	15	18	5	11	16	34
<u>How Often Does VEC hold its meetings</u>							
Once every month	41	25	66	28	42	70	136
Every two months	3	13	16	19	17	36	52
Three or more	16	22	38	13	1	14	52
<u>Where are Meetings Held</u>							
School	58	52	110	60	60	120	230
Panchayat Bhawan	2	8	10	--	--	--	10
<u>How Many Members Attended the Meeting</u>							
3 - 5	9	5	14	14	1	15	29
6 - 7	26	27	53	26	30	56	109
8 - 9	10	14	24	15	18	33	57
Above 9	15	14	29	5	11	16	45
<u>Relation Between VEC & Village Panchayat</u>							
They complement each other	43	34	77	32	32	64	141
VEC Members are also Panchayat Members	16	26	42	27	28	55	97
No Relation	1	--	1	1	--	1	2

The meetings of the VEC are generally held once every month as indicated by around 57 per cent respondents. The rest have pointed out that the meetings are held every two months or after a lapse of three or more months. Here it may be pointed out that according to the rules the VEC meetings are supposed to be held every month. These meetings are almost always held in the respective basic schools. Only in the case of Nainital district it has been reported by a few respondents that these meetings are also held in the Panchayat Bhawan.

While the structure of the VEC is such that it can have upto 12 members, it is generally observed that all these members are very rarely found attending the VEC meetings. Around half of the total respondents report that VEC meetings are generally attended by 6-7 members only. Nearly one-fourth have reported that 8 to 9 members are usually attending these meetings while another 19 per cent have put the number at more than 9 members. The rest have indicated that the strength of VEC members attending the meeting fluctuates between 3-5 members only. As far as the two districts are concerned, there is not much of a variation (Table 2.4).

Looking at the relationship between the VEC and the Village Panchayat, as many as 59.5 per cent respondents were of the opinion that these two bodies complement each other and the rest (40.5 per cent) feel that the only relationship which they share is that some VEC members are also elected members of the Village Panchayat. One respondent from each district have failed to see any relationship between the two bodies (Table 2.4).

The role played by the VEC in the educational development is highlighted with the help of Table 2.5. The first aspect about which a question was posed to the VEC members was whether the teachers attend school regularly. By and large the VEC members were of the opinion that teachers are fairly regular and this positive response

Table 2.5 : Role Played by VEC in Educational Development

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Are Teachers Regular</u>							
Yes	48	45	93	40	41	81	174
No	12	15	27	20	19	39	66
<u>If No, What Step Does VEC Take</u>							
Nothing	7	8	15	12	13	25	40
Administrative Action	5	7	12	8	6	14	26
<u>Present Facilities Available in School</u>							
Electricity	--	16	16	--	4	4	20
Drinking Water	54	32	86	57	60	117	203
Toilet	55	52	107	58	56	114	221
Boundary Wall	6	8	14	2	11	13	27
Games & Equipment	22	17	39	15	12	27	66
Furniture	21	16	37	21	17	38	75
<u>What Facilities are not Available</u>							
Lack of Teachers	--	2	2	12	19	31	33
Lack of Toilet & Drinking Water	6	13	19	4	2	6	25
Electricity	--	7	7	--	1	1	8
Boundary Wall	16	17	33	25	39	64	97
Lack of Classrooms	1	3	4	12	9	21	25
Poor Condition of Building	1	4	5	7	8	15	20
Lack of Peon	1	3	4	2	3	5	9
Lack of Play Field	1	2	3	4	3	7	10
<u>What is the VEC doing to remove the problems</u>							
Not doing anything because of lack of funds	3	14	17	20	18	38	55
Making efforts to obtain more funds	16	31	47	19	35	54	101

is given by almost 72.5 per cent of the total respondents. This means that only around one-fourth feel that there is some problem related to regular attendance of the teachers. Since primary education is of paramount importance, irregularity even by 25 per cent teachers can cause a negative impact on the attitude of children towards their studies. When the teachers themselves are irregular it will send wrong signals to the children

and they can be casual and indifferent towards their own attendance. Taking the two districts separately it is observed that the situation is worse off in Sitapur because around 32.5 per cent VEC members have reported irregularity among teachers. In Nainital, on the other hand irregularity is reported by around 22.5 per cent respondents. What is intriguing is to note that out of the respondents who have reported irregularity among teachers, around 60 per cent say that no steps are being taken by the VECs to rectify this problem. The rest have said that some administrative action is taken against the offenders (Table 2.5).

When the VEC members were asked about the existing facilities available in the basic schools the two main facilities which have been highlighted are those related to drinking water and toilet as indicated by around 85 and 92 per cent respondents. The other facilities cited are games and equipment (27.5 per cent) and furniture (31.25 per cent). Two other facilities have been pointed out and these are electricity (approx. 8 per cent) and boundary wall (around 11 per cent). The schools run by the Parishad are not electrified and the limited number of schools which do have this facility is as a result of the initiative taken by the VECs. It is sad to observe that the percentage of basic schools having a boundary wall is rather low. During the survey it was observed that out of the total number of schools covered by us the problem of boundary wall was found in as many as 17 schools in Nainital and 25 schools in Sitapur and this works out to be around 28 per cent and 42 per cent of the schools from the two districts respectively. The respondents have highlighted this as the most important facility which the schools lag (Table 2.5). The other facilities which should be better provided are teachers and class rooms. The respondents also complain that the maintenance of the school building is not done properly and that even though toilet and drinking water facilities are provided the hand pumps are not maintained and toilets not kept clean.

When the respondents were asked as to the steps the VEC was taking to ensure that the facilities which are presently lagging are provided around one-third have responded that nothing is being done as a result of the limited funds available with the respective schools while the rest have stated that they have been making efforts to obtain additional funds (Table 2.5).

Table 2.6 : Training to VEC Members

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Did you receive any Training</u>							
Yes	59	56	115	55	57	112	227
No	1	4	5	5	3	8	13
<u>How Many Times was Training Given</u>							
Once	59	56	115	55	57	112	227
More than once	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>Duration of Training : 3 days</u>	59	56	115	55	57	112	227
<u>Need for Improving the Training</u>							
No Need	38	22	60	21	26	47	107
Make aware about Duties	--	15	15	6	14	20	35
Increase the Duration of Training	9	14	23	23	3	26	49
Training by appropriate persons	5	4	9	5	15	20	29
Training every year	6	9	15	5	9	14	29

There is a provision to provide training to the VEC members. Details in this connection have been presented in Table 2.6. Over 94 per cent respondents have received this training once only and for a period of three days. When asked to give their opinion with respect to bringing about an improvement in the training around 43 per cent feel that the training programme does not need any change. However, around 20

per cent feel that the duration of training is needs to be increased and around 14 per cent feel that more time should be spent on making the VEC members aware of their duties. Around 12 per cent feel that the persons who train them during the three day training course should be better and more appropriate and an equal percentage feel that such training should be provided each year (Table 2.6).

Table 2.7 : Functions Performed by the VEC and its Result

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>What functions has the VEC completed</u>							
Building Construction, Boundary Wall, Leveling of Field and Construction of Road	28	21	49	12	11	23	72
Electrification	--	10	10	--	2	2	12
Availability of Water & Toilet	39	16	55	36	23	59	114
Beautification and plantation	10	22	32	25	31	56	88
Spread of Education	3	9	12	11	8	19	31
Regularization of Teacher	13	11	24	9	7	16	40
100% Enrolment and regular Balgadna	14	12	26	13	10	23	49
<u>What Improvement can be seen as a Result of the Effort of VEC and Panchayat</u>							
Improving the system of studies	26	30	56	18	17	35	91
Increasing enrolment & decreasing dropouts	29	20	49	23	17	40	89
Regular attendance of Teachers	17	16	33	8	11	19	52
Improving condition of the school and additional building	3	9	12	11	5	16	28
Making available essential facilities	5	7	12	12	4	16	28
Increased participation of local community	8	7	15	5	6	11	26

The VEC members were asked to describe the type of functions which they have performed and the areas in which improvements can be seen as a result of the steps taken by the VEC. This information is provided in Table 2.7. The three most significant areas in which the VEC has been active are making the provision of drinking water and

toilets (47.5 per cent responses), beautification of the school premises (36.7 per cent responses) and undertaking various construction activities such as construction of building or boundary wall, approach road and leveling of the land, etc. (30 per cent responses). However, as far as the key issues such as achieving total enrolment and compiling *Bal Gadna*, regularization of teaching and spread of education is concerned the responses have not been very satisfactory since the percentage of respondents to highlight this aspect are only around 20, 17 and 13 per cent respectively in that order.

As against this when the respondents have offered their opinion about the areas in which improvements can be seen the most important improvements have been identified as that in the system of studies and in increasing enrolment and reducing dropout rates. The percentage of respondents in each of these two categories are around 38 and 37 per cent respectively. The next most important area of improvement is ensuring greater regularity of the teachers (around 22 per cent). The other improvements, although to a lesser extent, have been in improving the condition of the building, providing essential facilities and assuring increased participation of the local public. The fact that improvement in education can be achieved even by a minimum effort goes to show that if the problem is properly addressed success can be achieved particularly in a community where a reasonable proportion of individuals are literate.

When we look at the two districts separately it is observed while there was a similarity as far as the functions of the VECs is concerned but where it came to areas of improvement the improvement in the education system and in increasing the enrolment and reducing dropout rates was reported by a much higher proportion in Nainital (47 and 41 per cent respectively) as compared to Sitapur (29 and 33 per cent respectively). Nainital has a higher literacy rate and this could explain why even a minimum effort has produced favourable results (Table 2.7).

Details pertaining to monitoring of the working of the VECs, education related problems in villages and their possible solutions are shown in Table 2.8. Nearly 56 per cent of the total respondents have said that the working of VECs is monitored. This percentage is higher in the case of Nainital (66.67 per cent) as compared to Sitapur (45 per cent). The individual who mainly looks after the working of the VECs is the Assistant Basic Shiksha Adhikari of the concerned area. A few respondents have also indicated that the VEC work is monitored by the Coordinator BRC and DIET officials. When the VEC members were asked to identify the problems related to education, the three most important aspects highlighted were shortage of teachers, poor condition of school building and lack of awareness among parents. Another important aspect towards which attention was drawn, although by fewer number of respondents, was shortage of classrooms. However, when we look at these responses in the two districts individually it is observed that the problem related to shortage of teachers as well as poor condition of the school building is more acute in the case of Sitapur. This is supported by our secondary information as well since the teacher-student ratio was found to be favourable in the case of Nainital but quite poor in Sitapur. The other problem areas of Sitapur are shortage of classrooms, schools not imparting good quality education, lack of awareness among parents and irregularities in providing scholarship to the poor children. As against this the two main problems indicated in Nainital district are lack of awareness among parents and the poor condition of the school buildings. Among the four blocks covered by us the least number of problems have been identified in the case of Bhimtal.

The solution to the problem lies in the problems themselves. Thus it is pointed out that the strength of the teachers be adequately increased, proper repair and maintenance of school building must be ensured and additional classrooms be provided

in schools which do not have a sufficient number of class rooms. Along with these improvements efforts should be made to improve the quality of education as well (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8 : Details about Working of VEC, Its Monitoring and Problems

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Is the Working of VEC Monitored</u>							
Yes	46	34	80	26	28	54	134
No	14	26	40	34	32	66	106
<u>If Yes, by whom</u>							
SDI, ABSA	35	25	60	22	25	47	107
Coordinator of BRC	7	3	10	3	5	8	18
DIET Officials	8	8	16	7	2	9	25
<u>What are the Problems Related to Education In Your Village</u>							
Shortage of Teachers	1	15	16	45	29	74	90
Shortage of Classrooms & equipments	7	10	17	15	17	32	49
Poor condition of building boundary wall and approach road	12	16	28	18	28	46	74
Quality of Education, English to be taught form Class I	4	9	13	10	11	21	34
Problem of drinking water & toilet	2	10	12	3	2	5	17
Lack of science & Maths kits.	1	2	3	--	--	--	3
Lack of awareness among parents	26	21	47	15	12	27	74
No Junior High School	1	--	1	--	2	2	3
School far away from Village	4	3	7	1	2	3	10
Water & toilet facilities are being used by village people	2	7	9	3	6	9	18
<u>Solution to the Problems</u>							
Teaching staff to be increased	1	15	16	45	29	74	90
Additional classrooms & equipment to be provided	7	10	17	15	17	32	49
Proper repair & maintenance of building, boundary wall, etc.	12	16	28	18	28	46	74
Improved quality of Education	4	9	13	10	11	21	34
Make drinking water & toilet facility available	2	10	12	3	2	5	17
Every School must have science & Maths kits	1	--	1	--	2	2	3
Every village must have a Primary & Jr. School	4	3	7	2	2	4	11
Scholarship should be available for all poor children	5	8	13	13	11	24	37
Villagers must be stopped from using toilet facility and drinking water in school	2	7	9	3	1	4	18

As a result of the amendment in the Panchayati Raj Act greater powers have been vested in the Panchayat. In recent years the NGOs have been increasingly involved in bringing about improvement in the quality of life in the villages as well as urban areas. Some NGOs have been doing extremely good work in the field of education, health and bringing about awareness among the masses on matters related to hygiene, small family norms, etc. We, therefore, enquired from the VEC members whether the VEC has taken help from either the Panchayat or any NGO active in their area and the type of help received. This information is depicted in Table 2.9. Only 42 per cent of the total respondents have reported that the help or co-operation of the Panchayat or a NGO has been taken by the VECs. The positive responses were more in the case of Nainital (almost fifty per cent) and the areas in which help was sought in the district related to increasing awareness among parents and to increase the enrolment rates. In both cases the VECs have benefitted since both awareness and enrolment rates have shown an improvement. In the case of Sitapur it is obvious that since the help has not been sought even the extent of improvement is very limited.

The reasons cited for not taking any help from either the Panchayat or NGO some VEC members have felt that there was no problem which called for help from either of the two bodies. More of such cases are found in Nainital district. In the case of Sitapur it is found that there were no NGOs in quite a few villages. The VEC or the NGO was not contacted because of the lack of interest shown by them. Yet another reason was that even where the Panchayat or NGO has taken interest and given some suggestions for improvement the officials of the education department have not paid any heed to them. Yet another reason for not seeking help of the NGOs is that they themselves work on a limited budget and so are unable to extend any help even if they want to do so (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9 : Participation of NGOs or Panchayat

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Has the VEC taken the help or cooperation of NGOs or Panchayat to solve problems</u>							
Yes	34	25	59	20	22	42	101
No	26	35	61	40	38	78	139
<u>If Yes, what was the Result</u>							
Awareness about education has increased	13	13	26	5	9	14	40
Enrolment rates have improved	22	18	40	8	6	14	54
Play fields have been leveled	--	7	7	2	5	7	14
Posting of teachers	--	2	2	5	2	7	9
<u>If No, What are the Reasons</u>							
NGOs/Panchayat do not take interest	1	9	10	11	6	17	27
Officials of the education Deptt. do not pay attention to the suggestion of NGOs/Panchayat	8	2	10	2	13	15	25
Limited resources and so are unable to help even if they want to do so	3	8	11	1	3	4	15
No NGOs in the Village	3	10	13	25	14	39	52
No Problems	11	6	17	1	2	3	20

One of the important roles which a VEC is expected to play is to establish a proper rapport with the people so as to assure their full cooperation in achieving the goal of Universalization of Primary Education. It has been proved beyond doubt that no programme can achieve success without creating awareness among the people and receiving their cooperation. Accordingly some questions related to the people's co-operation etc. were also included in our schedule of the VEC members and these have been tabulated and depicted in Table 2.10. On the basis of the responses received by us it is seen that more than half the respondents (around 53 per cent) have said that

Table 2.10 : People's Co-operation in Solving Problems Related to Education

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Do you receive Peoples Cooperation</u>							
Yes	25	33	58	23	31	54	112
No	35	27	62	37	29	66	128
<u>If Yes, in what way</u>							
Financial help	--	9	9	--	4	4	13
Physical labour in repair & construction	8	9	17	12	8	20	37
Participation when called for	17	15	32	11	19	30	62
<u>If No, why</u>							
Guardians do not take interest	15	10	25	14	9	23	48
Lack of awareness and illiteracy	16	14	30	13	15	28	58
No time	4	3	7	10	5	15	22
<u>Efforts of VEC to ensure peoples' participation</u>							
No efforts	5	10	15	20	17	37	52
Effort to establish support through village Panchayat meeting	25	16	41	20	21	41	82
Rally to make people aware of education	13	20	33	13	19	32	65
Meeting of Guardians	13	8	21	4	1	5	26
By improving the quality of education and facility in the school	4	6	10	3	2	5	15
<u>Are the Parents aware about the education of their children</u>							
Yes	58	55	113	48	46	94	207
No	2	5	7	12	14	26	33
<u>Are they particularly aware of specific aspects such as:</u>							
<u>Enrolment</u>							
Yes	60	59	119	58	56	114	233
No	--	1	1	2	4	6	7
<u>Dropouts</u>							
Yes	59	55	114	56	54	110	224
No	1	5	6	4	6	10	16
<u>Girls Education</u>							
Yes	59	56	115	50	49	99	214
No	1	4	5	10	11	21	26
<u>If No, What is the VEC doing</u>							
Motivating them and making them aware about the need for education	1	3	4	9	12	21	25
Increasing awareness by Rallies	1	2	3	3	2	5	8

proper co-operation is not being received from the people in the village. The reasons for this lack of co-operation are lack of interest shown by the guardians, problems of awareness among the people and the fact that some people are too busy to be able to extend their co-operation. In the case of the two districts we have received similar responses.

Out of those respondents who accept that they are receiving people's co-operation the nature of co-operation is in form of participation whenever called for, putting in physical labour at the time of construction or repair of the school building and also providing some financial assistance. However, financial assistance is reported only from the blocks of Haldwani and Leharpur.

When asked about the efforts put in by the VEC members to ensure people's cooperation around 22.5 per cent have accepted the fact that no serious efforts have been made by them in this direction. Around one-third have stated that they have been meeting the guardians and impressing upon them the need for hundred per cent enrolment as well as retention. Around one-fourth have sought the people's cooperation through the Panchayat meetings. These two categories of respondents, therefore, account for slightly over 61 per cent of the total respondents. This leaves us with only around 17 per cent respondents. They have said that efforts have been made to ensure cooperation of the people by taking out rallies and by bringing about a qualitative improvement in the educational facilities of the basic school (Table 2.10). Although the people may not be very cooperative a very high proportion of them are fully aware about the education of their children as reported by around 86 per cent respondents. This percentage is as high as 94 per cent in the case of Nainital and once

again is the result of the higher overall literacy rates of the district. The level of awareness can be gauged by the fact that they are fully aware about issues such as enrolment, dropouts and girls' education. In the case where awareness level is low the VEC members are making efforts to motivate them individually by impressing upon them the significance of education and through the various rallies which are organized as a part of the awareness campaign (Table 2.10).

Among the various objectives of the VEC the most important is to achieve 100 per cent enrolment, reduce dropout rates and bring the disadvantaged children into the mainstream of education and also the girl child. The information related to this aspect is given in Table 2.11. Almost all the VEC members have said that efforts which have been made have also had a positive impact on improving enrolment rates as well as decreasing the dropout rates in the schools. In order to ensure the enrolment of the children from the disadvantaged group the special efforts have been providing scholarship, providing mid-day meals, motivating the parents and the effort to establish primary schools where none exist. However, the most important efforts are provision of scholarship and parent's motivation. As far as the girls are concerned the special efforts made to ensure their enrolment have been parent's motivation, creating a proper environment, organizing rallies and posting female teachers in the basic schools.

The facilities which all schools enjoy are mid-day meals, scholarship to select group of children and provision of educational material mainly story books (Table 2.11).

Table 2.11 : Special Efforts of VEC to Promote All-round Education

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Have the efforts of VEC shown improvement in the following:</u>							
(a) <u>Enrolment</u>							
Yes	60	58	118	60	56	116	234
No	--	2	2	--	4	4	6
(b) <u>Dropouts</u>							
Yes	60	59	119	60	57	117	236
No	--	1	1	--	3	3	4
<u>What Special Efforts have been made to reduce dropouts</u>							
Efforts to Motivate Children	--	--	--	--	2	2	2
Efforts to motivate Parents	--	1	1	--	1	1	2
<u>Special Efforts to Motivate Disadvantaged Group</u>							
Scholarship	35	45	80	47	33	80	160
Mid-day meals	11	18	29	19	21	40	69
Motivating of parents	33	30	63	21	35	56	119
Efforts to open primary school where none exist	5	3	8	4	2	6	14
<u>Special Efforts to Increase enrolment of Girls</u>							
By organizing Rallies	8	23	31	5	3	8	39
Motivating Parents	34	35	69	40	40	80	149
Creating a Proper environment	25	20	45	16	11	27	72
Posting of Female Teachers	3	1	4	5	10	15	19
<u>Are the Following Facilities Available to the Children</u>							
(a) <u>Uniform</u>							
Yes	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
No	60	60	120	60	60	120	240
(b) <u>Mid-day Meal</u>							
Yes	60	60	120	60	60	120	240
No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
(c) <u>Free Books</u>							
Yes	-	-	--	-	-	--	--
No	60	60	120	60	60	120	240
(d) <u>Other Educational Material (Story Books etc)</u>							
Yes	60	60	120	60	60	120	240
No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
(e) <u>Scholarship</u>							
Yes	60	60	120	60	60	120	240
No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Although during the three day training the VEC members are expected to be introduced to the concept of micro-planning, but effectively they are not very familiar with this concept since when they were asked to indicate their efforts at micro-planning they have said that the Bal Gadna registers have been prepared regularly (around 91 per cent responses) and the remaining have failed to respond to the question (Table 2.12).

Table 2.12 : Efforts of VEC in Micro-Planning over the Years

Micro Planning Efforts	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
Regular Balgadna	57	54	111	53	54	107	218
No Response	3	6	9	7	6	13	22

The VEC members were asked to whether parents offer suggestions for bringing about improvements in the education system when these members meet the parents and guardian. We have received positive response from around 66 per cent respondents (Table 2.13).

Table 2.13 : Role of Guardians

Do the Parents offer their suggestions for improving the education	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
Yes	42	39	81	40	37	77	158
No	18	21	39	20	23	43	82

It had been indicated earlier that the VEC members have been successful in generating funds with the help of people's cooperation in the blocks of Haldwani in Nainital and Leharpur in Sitapur. In the case of Haldwani these funds were utilized for electrification of the schools, leveling the land available with the school to convert it to a play field and for providing drinking water. In Leharpur, on the other hand, the funds generated have been put to a single use only and that is making a play field for children by leveling the land in possession of the basic school (Table 2.14).

Table 2.14 : Availability of Funds through People's Cooperation

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Has the VEC Managed to Generate Funds through People's Cooperation</u>							
Yes	--	9	9	--	4	4	13
No	60	51	111	60	56	116	227
<u>How the Funds were Utilized</u>							
For electriflcation and fans	--	4	4	--	--	--	4
For providing drinking water	--	1	1	--	--	--	1
Leveling of Land & Making Play Ground	--	4	4	--	4	4	8

Finally we have tried to obtain the perception of the VEC members on various aspects such as the availability of finance and other problems and how these problems can be tackled. This information is in Table 2.15. Only around 7.5 per cent of the VEC members are of the opinion that the funds at the disposal of the VECs are sufficient. The rest have made a serious complaint that whatever funds they receive are highly inadequate.

Table 2.15 : Perception of VEC Members

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Are the Finances received by VEC sufficient</u>							
Yes	7	2	9	6	3	9	18
No	53	58	111	54	57	111	222
<u>What are the Problems Faced by the VEC</u>							
Lack of Funds	40	46	86	37	43	80	166
Lack of interest by VEC Members	24	35	59	23	30	53	112
Resolution passed are not implemented by Government officials	3	9	12	5	6	11	23
More Power with VEC desirable	2	5	7	13	5	18	25
Lack of coordination between VEC Members & Teachers	3	4	7	6	7	13	20
Lack of Monitoring the Teaching & School by administration	3	1	4	4	2	6	10
Lack of Peoples cooperation	12	8	20	11	15	26	46
<u>Solution to the Problems</u>							
More funds to be made available	40	46	86	37	43	80	166
Members of VEC to be motivated and literates should be its members	24	35	59	23	30	53	112
Govt. Officials should try to adopt the Resolution passed by VEC	3	9	12	5	6	11	23
VEC to be vested with more power	2	5	7	13	5	18	25
Teachers should be properly motivated	3	4	7	6	7	13	20
People should be motivated	15	8	23	11	15	26	49
Regular monitoring by the administration	3	1	4	4	2	6	10
Some token allowance be given to VEC Members	9	4	13	10	8	18	31

The other problems besides inadequate funds are that the VEC members who are illiterate do not take adequate interest in the smooth functioning of the VECs. This is the most important aspect as highlighted by almost 47 per cent respondents. The next most important aspect is lack of peoples' cooperation (19 per cent response). The other aspects which have been indicated are the fact that VEC does not have sufficient power, that the resolutions passed in the VEC meetings are not implemented by the

government officials and that there is a lack of co-ordination among the members of the VEC and the teachers (Table 2.15).

The solutions lie in the problem itself. Therefore, it has been pointed out that sufficient funds should be made available with each VEC, VEC members should be literate and properly motivated to undertake the responsibilities entrusted to them, proper motivation of the people to ensure their cooperation, greater powers be vested in the VEC and that suggestions given by the VEC should also be adopted by the officials if a positive impact on education is to be made.

It will be appropriate to sum up the chapter by seeing how far the objectives of the study have been covered as a result of our analysis of the data related to the VEC members. In the first place it is very clear from the analysis that the constitution of the VECs has been done in accordance to the rules which have been laid down in the government order. This goes to show that our first objective has duly been taken care of and the formation of the VECs has been done keeping in mind the norms. Since our sample was purposive we have selected those VEC members who get automatically selected by virtue of being the Pradhan and the Headmaster as well as those who are either elected or nominated. In order to have a proper cross section of the society we deliberately selected females as well as members belonging to the SC, ST and OBC categories for detailed survey.

Our second objective relates to the extent to which VECs have succeeded in enlisting the cooperation of the local community. On this front the VECs have only received partial success since around 53 per cent of our respondents have reported that they have not been able to receive co-operation from the people. The reasons cited by them for being unable to enlist their co-operation are lack of interest among the

guardians, lack of awareness and illiteracy among the people, and that some people do not have any time to co-operate with the VEC members. However, they are making efforts to ensure that they receive the people's co-operation by methods such as Panchayat meetings, organizing rallies to create awareness and by holding meetings with guardians in order to motivate them. But one disturbing aspect has been that around 22 per cent respondents have also admitted that no efforts are being made to seek people's co-operation.

Possibly the most important objective of our study is the third which deals with the role of VECs in educational development in the villages in terms of increased enrolment and retention, declining dropouts and making education accessible to all with a special focus on the deprived sections of the community and the girl child. To begin with it has been pointed out by nearly 72.5 per cent respondents that the VECs have been able to ensure regular attendance of the teachers. But even 25 per cent irregularity should not be taken lightly. A very high percentage of the respondents have stated that the VECs have been successful in bringing about improvement in the rate of enrolment and in lowering dropout rates. This has been achieved by motivating parents, taking out rallies to bring about awareness and by making parents aware of the schemes such as scholarships and mid-day meals.

As far as the role of the VEC in motivating community in the opening of new schools is concerned our selected VECs were in the villages where schools already existed. However, in many cases the co-operation of the local people has been received as a result of the efforts of the VEC members to get repair and maintenance work done in the schools. For this people have put in physical labour as well as made financial contributions. This was the fourth objective of the study.

And finally, there has been some rapport established between the VEC members as well as the teachers and parents. The VEC members have been holding meetings with the parents in order to motivate them for sending their children to school and to avoid dropouts. Similarly they have been motivating the teachers as well to ensure their regularity in attendance as well as teaching. However, this is one area where greater efforts have yet to be made to ensure 100 per cent enrolment, zero dropouts among children and 100 per cent attendance along with proper teaching as far as the teachers are concerned.

In the next chapter we will make an effort to analyze the information which we have collected from the teachers in our selected schools.

CHAPTER – 3

TEACHERS ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF VECs AND THE EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO

Just as the VEC members have a significant role to play in ensuing educational development, the task cut out for the teachers is equally important. The teachers can, if they are really sincere, create a conducive environment in which a proper atmosphere can be set up to impart education to the children. Teaching itself can be made interesting by adopting the latest teaching methods and through their own regularity they can inculcate the proper values among the children and impress upon them to come to school regularly and gain knowledge. The teachers can not only influence the children but also their parents by motivating them and making them aware about the significance of education. Once the parents have been sufficiently motivated the problems related to enrolment and retention can be effectively tackled. It is with this significance of the teachers that we designed a questionnaire specially for them and selected two teachers from the schools attached to a VEC. Since we have covered a total of 60 VECs our sample constitutes of 120 teachers. Care was taken to ensure that from both male and female teacher was selected in our sample. In the case of Nainital district, female teachers dominated the schools which were selected on the basis of the VECs and so out of the sample of 60 teachers from the district there were 12 males (20 per cent) and 48 female teachers (80 per cent). In Sitapur district, however, our sample was evenly divided between male and female teachers. Our schedule was so designed to collect information from the teachers regarding formation of the VECs and the role performed by the VEC. Besides this they were also asked to give their opinion about

the situation of education in their school and village and the different problems associated with education. In this chapter therefore we shall make an effort to analyze this information. Besides this, from each of the schools covered by us we have also collected details of the children who were enrolled in Class III during the years 1998 and 1999 and those who left school before completing Class III. This information too is being presented in the chapter.

All the teachers in our sample have confirmed the fact that the constitution of the VECs has been done properly keeping in mind the rules and regulations laid down (Table 3.1). However, when they were asked to view their opinion as far as the functioning of the VECs was concerned only around 57 per cent have said that the VECs are functioning properly. As far as the reasons identified for non-functioning there have been multiple responses from the teachers. The two most important criticisms leveled against the Village Education Committee is that its meetings are not held regularly and that the members do not take much of an interest in the spread of education. Almost two-thirds of the respondents, who have found the functioning of the VECs unsatisfactory, have identified these two aspects. Yet another point which teachers have highlighted is that despite their maximum effort at pointing out the need for having extra teachers, the VEC has not taken any step whatsoever to make any effort in this direction. However, it may be stated that in the earlier chapter the VEC members have expressed their anguish at the fact that the recommendations, which they place before the authorities of the BSA office, are not considered. The other grounds which the teachers have criticised the VECs are that a maximum percentage of VEC members constitutes of political persons, who have been selected to the VEC by virtue of being elected panchayat members or nominated by the Pradhan. However, even when selections are being made from categories such as SC/ST, or OBC and

female member of the Panchayat the Pradhan generally selects individuals who are of his liking.

Table 3.1 : Teachers Opinion about Function of VECs

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Has the VEC been constituted properly</u>							
Yes	30	30	60	30	30	60	120
<u>Is the VEC performing its Role in Education Properly</u>							
Yes	20	19	39	13	16	29	68
No	10	11	21	17	14	31	52
<u>If Not, Why?</u>							
Meetings are not held regularly	8	6	14	11	9	20	34
Members do not take interest in Education	6	7	13	8	12	20	33
The Organization of VEC is Political in nature	3	5	8	10	9	19	27
Shortage of Teachers has not been taken up	1	3	4	12	14	26	30
Selection of Members not appropriate	3	5	8	7	9	16	24
<u>Has the VEC played positive Role in Promoting Girls' Education</u>							
Yes	22	19	41	18	17	35	76
No	8	11	19	12	13	25	44

When we look at the responses from the teachers of the two blocks it is found that in the case of Nainital the teachers are less critical of the functioning of the VECs since around 65 per cent are satisfied with the VECs and their functioning. In Sitapur on the other hand only around 48 per cent are satisfied teachers. There is not much variation between the two blocks of Nainital or the two blocks of Sitapur (Table 3.1).

Even when we enquired from the teachers as to whether the VEC members have been playing a positive role to promote education among the disadvantaged group of

population and the girls, it is observed that the positive response in the case of Nainital is much higher at around 68 per cent as compared to Sitapur (among 58 per cent). It may be appropriate to indicate that ever since Independence the government has been laying great stress on the education of the girls as well as children belonging to the disadvantaged group of population. Consequently, it is expected that the VECs will leave no stone unturned to ensure maximum enrolment of children from both these categories. Therefore, if only around 60 or 70 per cent teachers feel that VECs have been making an effort in this direction, it clearly gives the signal that the VECs should put in more efforts. Then only will positive results be obtained towards attaining the twin objectives of 100 per cent enrolment and retention among the girls as well as children belonging to the disadvantaged section of population.

Despite the fact that the teachers have complained that the VEC has not been successful in ensuring that the strength of the teachers is increased yet when they were asked to describe their relationship with the VEC almost 73 per cent have reported that it is good. Only around 20 per cent have described the relationship as an average one. Looking at the two districts separately, the level of satisfaction was almost similar in Nainital as well as Sitapur. Even at the block level similar responses were received with the exception of Haldwani block where only 60 per cent teachers have described their relationship with the VEC as good (Table 3.2).

The parent-teacher meeting is an important method through which the parents can be appraised about the progress of their children and they can also be motivated to send all children in the school going age to the primary school as well as influence those parents who are not doing so. It was, therefore, satisfying to note that around 94 per cent teachers have responded that their schools are holding parent-teacher meetings. However, the pattern regarding the frequency of holding these meetings

varied. It was observed that an equal number of teachers have stated that the parent-teacher meetings are held once in three months and once every six months or more. There were also a few teachers in whose school these meetings are being held either every month or every alternative months. In the case of Nainital district the general pattern is to hold meetings every three months while in Sitapur a larger number of schools have been having the parent-teacher meetings once in six months or more. In fact this is so because of the schools in Hargaon, where this is the pattern in around 83 per cent schools (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 : Relation Between Teachers and the VEC

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>What Type of Relationship Exists Between Teacher and VEC?</u>							
Good	25	18	43	22	23	45	88
Average	5	12	17	8	7	15	32
<u>Does the School have Parents-Teacher Meeting</u>							
Yes	25	30	55	28	30	58	113
No	5	--	5	2	--	2	7
<u>If Yes, How Often</u>							
No meeting	5	--	5	2	--	2	7
Once in every month	2	4	6	1	2	3	9
Once in two months	--	--	--	--	4	4	4
Once in three months	15	15	30	2	18	20	50
Once in every six months or more	8	11	19	25	6	31	50

The teachers were asked to give their views about the factors, which result in dropouts among the children of their area. The reasons were divided into economic, social, administrative and other reasons. The teachers were asked to identify these reasons and also describe the steps, which have been taken by them to overcome the

Table 3.3 : Teacher's View on Factors Causing Dropout

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>MAIN REASONS FOR DROPOUT</u>							
<u>Economic Reasons</u>							
No Problem	24	12	36	4	6	10	46
Poverty	5	18	23	18	15	33	56
Migration	4	11	15	7	9	16	31
<u>Social Reasons</u>							
No Problem	23	16	39	8	5	13	52
Child Marriage	4	10	14	13	11	24	38
Household Work	5	7	12	17	13	30	42
<u>Administrative Reasons</u>							
No Problem	23	16	39	6	2	8	47
Lack of Teachers	2	4	6	19	22	41	47
Policy of not giving scholarship to failures	3	7	10	6	9	15	25
Education system not good	1	3	4	3	5	8	12
Lack of proper facilities in the schools	4	6	10	24	26	50	60
<u>Other Reasons</u>							
No Problem	19	21	40	16	18	34	74
Teacher's attitude are not good	6	9	15	14	12	26	41
Many persons are running school only to earn money	4	7	11	11	9	20	31
<u>What Steps Have You Taken to Counter the Problem of Dropout</u>							
No response	3	10	13	4	6	10	23
Increase awareness among parents & Guardians	26	22	48	17	13	30	78
Motivate children	19	12	31	14	18	32	63
Use of science and maths kits	9	11	20	7	9	16	36
Make people aware of scholarship and other facilities	11	13	24	11	13	24	48

problem of dropouts. We have received multiple responses from the teachers and the information received is shown in Table 3.3. As far as the economic reasons for dropout is concerned, around 38 per cent feel that there is no problem of dropouts because of economic factors. Those who feel that economic factors influence the dropout rate the main reason is poverty as indicated by almost half the respondents and another 26 per cent have stated that the economically weaker section tends to migrate in search of better job opportunities and so the school going children dropout. Economic problems are more pronounced in Sitapur, where around 83 per cent teachers have identified one of the two reasons cited above. In Nainital district on the other hand only 40 per cent respondents have expressed their opinion that dropouts are affected by economic factors.

As far as the social factors responsible for causing dropouts among children are concerned, the two main factors highlighted are child marriage and household activities. It is the girl child that is the main sufferer on the social front. But a larger number of teachers feel that these social factors are not very significant since around 43 per cent of our teachers have expressed the opinion that this is not a factor adversely affecting dropout since the child in the primary school going age is 6-11 years and that is junior basic school 11-14 years and marriages are normally held after a girl attains 14 years of age. Even among those who feel that the social factors adversely affect dropouts the reason for it is mainly the engagement of the children in household work. The exception in this case being Haldwani block which has even affected the response of the district as a whole (Table 3.3).

There are also administrative factors, which lead to dropout among children, such as shortage of teachers, the education system not being very good, and lack of adequate facilities in school. As a result of these limitations there is not enough

incentive among the parents to retain their children in school. Even the children tend to be indifferent towards studies. Yet another factor which is adversely affecting the dropout rate is that children who are availing the facility of getting scholarship, do not get it in case they fail in Class III or IV. Such students tend to dropout. here it may be pointed out that children are not failed in the exams of Class I and II. Out of these administrative lacunae the one which affects dropout rates most is the lack of proper facilities in school. Yet another problem over and above there is that the attitude of teachers is not good and so children tend to dropout (Table 3.3).

In order to counter the problem related to dropout the most important step taken by teachers is to increase awareness among parents and guardians as reported by around 65 per cent teachers. Between the two districts a higher proportion of teachers in Nainital (around 80 per cent) believe in motivating parents and making them aware as compared to Sitapur (50 per cent). The next most important method of reducing dropout rate is the motivation of students and we have received similar response from each of the two districts. Two other means adopted are to make the eligible children aware of the scholarship, which they can avail and by making studies interesting through the use of modern techniques such as science and mathematics kits. From around 20 per cent teachers we could not get any response as to the steps, which have been taken to reduce dropout rates. They could be those teachers who have done nothing in this direction but could not accept the fact that they have been indifferent towards the problem (Table 3.3).

We asked the teachers to give their opinion about the ways and means, which can be adopted for attaining the goal of universalization of education. We received multiple answers and these have been tabulated in Table 3.4. The most important aspect from the point of view of the teachers is that schools must have proper teaching

Table 3.4 : Teachers View about Universalization of Education

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>What are your suggestion for Universalization of Education</u>							
No suggestion	--	--	--	2	--	2	2
Free book & stationery	12	16	28	17	24	41	69
Compulsory enrolment specially for girls	13	10	23	8	25	33	56
Syllabus to be modified	7	3	10	7	4	11	21
Schools to have proper facilities including staff	13	17	30	23	17	40	70
Even the poor from general caste be given incentives	2	3	5	7	9	16	21
Proper utilization of World Bank Aid	12	11	23	15	10	25	48
VEC to function properly	1	2	3	11	13	24	27
Incentive to Teachers	4	2	6	13	16	29	35
<u>Administrative Problems in Universalization of Education</u>							
No Problem	--	--	--	1	--	1	1
General children are not given scholarship	18	20	38	9	11	20	58
No proper inspection of school	5	7	12	13	17	30	42
Change in the education system	13	12	25	7	9	16	41
Extra workload on the teacher besides teaching	12	15	27	19	17	36	63
Administration does not look in the requirement of the school	5	8	13	11	17	28	41
Schools do not have sufficient teachers	1	2	3	18	21	39	42
Compulsory education is not being implemented	2	2	4	7	11	18	22

facilities including sufficient and good quality teachers. Over 58 per cent teachers have identified this aspect. The second equally important way suggested is to provide free books and stationery to the children (around 57 per cent responses). The next two aspects from the point of significance given by the teachers are that compulsory enrolment particularly of the girls must be ensured and that the aid, which is being received from the World Bank, must be utilized in the best possible manner. Around 47 and 40 per cent teachers respectively have spoken in favour of these two methods through which universalization of education can be achieved. Some teachers also feel

that incentives should be provided to teachers and the other suggestions are that the VEC must function properly, the syllabus should be modified and that even the economically weaker household children should be given scholarship even if they are not eligible under the present reservation scheme (Table 3.4).

The administrative factors, which have been identified for being responsible in not achieving universalization of education are again around seven and so there is a multiple response situation. However, the two most important drawbacks on the part of the administration are giving extra workload on teachers over and above their teaching responsibilities (52.5 per cent response) and that the general category children are not provided scholarships (around 48 per cent response). The support for scholarship to general category children is more in the case of Nainital where the share of general category is high in the overall population. The other administrative lapses pointed out, but by a lesser number of teachers are that schools must be subject to regular and proper inspection, a change is desirable in the education system, the education department must fulfil the requirements of the school and that shortage of teaching staff should be dealt with by providing more teachers (Table 3.4).

The teachers have also expressed their views about the methods, which may be adopted to increase enrolment among different categories of children (See Table 3.5). As far as the different categories of children are concerned, the most important single way of achieving 100 per cent enrolment is to provide children free books as well as stationery. The response is as high as 79 and 77 per cent among teachers for attaining this goal in the case of SC/ST and girls respectively. The percentage of response is lower in the case of OBC and minority children where the teachers' response was 66 and around 52 per cent respectively. The other ways to offer incentive to the children is by providing them with free school dress. In the case of the SC/ST and OBC children

the teachers also feel that there is a need for making enrolment compulsory. In the case of the girl child the teachers feel that they should be given scholarships (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 : Teachers' View for Increasing Enrolment of SC/ST/OBC Children

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
SC Children							
Book and Stationery	25	23	48	21	26	47	95
Dress	26	21	47	18	21	39	86
Proper enrolment in the school	4	3	7	7	9	16	23
OBC Children							
Book and stationery	23	11	34	21	24	45	79
Dress	18	13	31	14	23	37	68
Enrolment	7	11	18	16	12	28	46
Minority							
Book and stationery	11	19	30	15	17	32	62
Dress	7	11	18	13	16	29	47
Girls							
Book and stationery	26	21	47	21	24	45	92
Dress	17	19	36	18	15	33	69
Scholarship	23	17	40	17	21	38	78

The teachers were also asked to express their opinion about the general atmosphere within the school, attitude towards them of the senior teachers, officials and the parents and guardians. Information related to these aspects is tabulated in Table 3.6. To begin with the first question posed was related to the attitude of the teachers regarding their work and towards the students. Almost 80 per cent teachers have answered in the affirmative. Out of those who have answered that the attitude is not very good are mainly teachers from Sitapur. As far as the general environment of the school is concerned, those who feel that the environment is conducive constitute only around 62 per cent of the teachers. Once again the overall average of the two districts

Table 3.6 : Teachers' View Related to Environment of the School

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Is the attitude of the Teachers good?</u>							
Yes	27	25	52	22	21	43	95
No	3	5	8	8	9	17	25
<u>Is the Environment of the School Good?</u>							
Yes	26	23	49	14	11	25	74
No	4	7	11	16	19	35	46
<u>Do You generally receive cooperation of Senior Teachers?</u>							
Yes	28	26	54	27	25	52	106
No	2	4	6	3	5	8	14
<u>Do you generally receive cooperation of officers?</u>							
Yes	26	24	50	19	17	36	86
No	4	6	10	11	13	24	34
<u>Do you generally receive cooperation of local people?</u>							
Yes	23	21	44	15	13	28	72
No	7	9	16	15	17	32	48

is brought down by the responses received in Sitapur. As many as 81 per cent teachers find the general environment good in Nainital but the corresponding figure in the case of Sitapur is around 42 per cent only. However, there is not much of a difference between the two districts as far as co-operation of the senior teachers is concerned since the overall figure is around 88 per cent of those teachers who are satisfied with the cooperation, which they receive from their senior teachers. The teachers are not very satisfied by the level of cooperation, which they receive from the officials to the same extent as they were with the senior teachers since the percentage of satisfied teachers is around 72. It is the teachers of Sitapur who are once again the dissatisfied lot because only 60 per cent are happy with the way they receive the cooperation of the officials. The level of satisfaction is far more in the case of Nainital

where the corresponding figure is around 83 per cent. Finally, the overall level of satisfaction of the teachers with the co-operation received from the local people is not high since only 60 per cent teachers are satisfied. Even in the case of the teachers in Nainital district the proportion of satisfied teachers was only 73 per cent.

One of the reasons why the teachers in general are less satisfied in Sitapur is because they feel that their strength is much less than the actual requirement. Moreover, teachers are asked to take charge of various responsibilities, which have nothing to do with teaching. Added to this is the fact that the overall literacy rate is low in the district and so it becomes difficult to receive people's cooperation as a result of their lack of awareness.

Finally, we asked the teachers to identify some of the problems of the VECs and the possible solution to these problems. There have been a number of problems identified and so there are multiple responses. Consequently, the teachers have also tried to offer solution to each of the identified problems. Table 3.7 relates to the problems of the VECs and the solution to the problems as perceived by the teachers. Only 4 out of the total sample of 120 teachers have said that by and large there is no problem faced by the VECs. The most important problem as visualized by around 58 per cent respondents is that the VEC members are not fully aware of their responsibilities mainly because a large number of them are illiterate and so attend the VEC meetings only occasionally. The second most important draw back pointed out follows from the first that because of the lack of awareness and irregularity of the VEC members they are unable to extend proper cooperation (around 52.5 per cent response). Yet another problem involving the VEC members is their selection. The VEC is being constituted according to the rules laid down. But when it comes to nomination of persons such as SC and ST members of the Panchayat and the female

member among the females elected to the Panchayat then the Pradhan has the final word and he elects those who are close to him and their ability and suitability becomes of secondary importance. As many as 47.5 per cent teachers have pointed out towards this drawback (Table 3.7). The teachers have also pointed out the fact that the fund at the disposal of the VEC is not sufficient to be able to bring about the desired change in the level of education of the village. This aspect has been highlighted by almost half the teachers. Some of the other areas where problems lie are that the training imparted to VEC members is not appropriate, that most VEC members are elected members of the Panchayat and so even the VEC becomes a political organization and that officials interfere with the functioning of the VECs unnecessarily.

Table 3.7 : Teachers' View about problems of VECs

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>What are the main problems of the VEC?</u>							
No Problem	1	--	1	3	--	3	4
Lack of Funds	16	14	30	12	17	29	59
Members of VEC not aware, irregular and illiterate	12	16	28	19	23	42	70
VEC members not interested and lack of cooperation	11	12	23	21	19	40	63
Selection of VEC member not proper	16	13	29	17	11	28	57
Undue intervention by Govt. officials	9	11	20	15	14	29	49
Training of VEC not good	5	8	13	11	13	24	37
VEC is a political group	3	4	7	11	9	20	27
<u>Solution to the Problems</u>							
No problem	--	1	1	3	--	3	4
Increased funds	17	15	32	20	17	37	69
Motivate the members	13	19	32	18	15	33	65
Proper selection of VEC Members and proper training	17	19	36	23	17	40	76
VEC should be vested with more powers	7	9	16	17	15	32	48
VEC to have separate funds	4	6	10	7	6	13	23
Administration should take note of its suggestions	3	7	10	9	6	15	25
Government should not keep altering its policy	2	4	6	4	5	9	15

As a result of the various problems highlighted, the maximum number of teachers (63 per cent) feel that the solution to the problem lies in ensuring proper selection of the VEC members and to give them training in such a way that they become fully aware about the role which they have to play as VEC members and the goals which have been identified for the Village Education Committee. Another significant step is to motivate the VEC members sufficiently in fulfilling their responsibilities. It is one thing to select people and give them training but unless they are a motivated lot the desired results will not be forthcoming. The proportion of teachers to identify this aspect was around 54 per cent. Around 57.5 per cent teachers have advocated that greater funds be placed at the disposal of the VEC. The other suggestions given for improving the functioning of the VECs are that the VEC must be vested with more powers, that the officials in the Basic Shiksha Directorate should take note of the suggestions put forward by the VECs and take appropriate measures to bring about the desired change; and that the government should not keep changing its policies. As has been pointed out in the first chapter the structure of VEC has been altered a number of times and also the duties, which they are to perform (Table 3.7). Even when we look at the two districts separately there is not very much of a difference as far as responses are concerned.

In the Schedule designed for the teachers another information was sought about the strength of the students in Class III during 1998 and 1999 according to the different categories of students and to try and identify the number of students from each category which did not complete their studies upto Class III. It has already been indicated earlier that in Class I and II children are not failed. Children, however, are failed in Class III and in case a child belonging to the reserved category for scholarship wishes to continue studies even after failing in class then he or she is not entitled to the

scholarship facility. The details related to enrolment of students in Class III in our selected primary schools of Bhimtal and Haldwani blocks are shown in Tables 3.8 and 3.9 for the years 1998 and 1999 respectively.

Table 3.8 : Details of Enrolment in Class III in Nainital District (1998)

District Block Village	Category of Students												Grand Total
	General		S.C.		S.T.		OBC		Minority		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
BHIMTAL													
Nagrigaon	2	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	8
Jyolikot	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	5
Mehragaon	4	2	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	9
Pandeygaon	1	6	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	11	12
Sangurigaon	2	3	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	4	9
Ranibagh	4	5	1	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	7	7	14
Bharatpur	3	-	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1	9
Shonegaon	1	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	5
Althona	3	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	5	3	8
Bhumiadhar	1	2	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	2	11
Chopra	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	9
Belwagaon	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	5
Dungshil	3	-	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	6	13
Ameeya	1	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	7
Bhorakoon	3	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	5	10
Total	42	31	29	24	2	1	3	1	-	1	76	58	134
HALDWANI													
Arjunpur	4	8	3	6	-	1	4	1	-	-	11	16	27
Dhanpur	6	9	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	10	19
Gangapur	4	4	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	6	5	11
Dungerpur	5	6	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	6	9	15
Kuarpur	9	5	4	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	14	6	20
Nayagaon Sambhal	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	9
Newal Khera	5	4	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	8	19
Khera	5	5	11	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	11	27
Lakhan Mandi	10	12	4	9	-	-	1	2	1	1	16	24	40
Mukhani	11	7	8	4	-	-	7	1	-	-	26	12	38
Himatpur Malla	11	13	10	6	-	1	18	9	2	1	41	30	71
Jawahar Jyoti	17	12	11	2	-	-	16	11	1	-	45	25	70
Dawalchour Khas	27	13	12	1	4	1	17	13	3	1	63	29	92
Fatehpur	9	13	6	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	10	15	31
Lohiya Sal Mella	11	5	7	5	1	-	12	7	2	-	33	17	50
TOTAL	138	121	86	50	6	3	78	45	9	3	317	222	539

Table 3.9 : Details of Enrolment in Class III in Nainital District (1999)

District Block Village	Category of Students												Grand Total
	General		S.C.		S.T.		OBC		Minority		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
BHIMTAL													
Nagrigaon	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
Jyolikot	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3
Mehragaon	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	4
Pandeygaon	1	3	11	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	14	26
Sangurigaon	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	4	4	8
Ranibagh	7	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	6	13
Bharatpur	-	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	4	6
Shonegaon	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	5
Althona	4	4	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	6	5	11
Bhumidhar	3	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	11
Chopra	7	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	5	12
Belwagaon	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
Dungshil	3	1	3	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	6	4	10
Ameeya	2	3	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	6	8
Bhorakoon	5	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	7	1	8
Total	42	27	32	22	2	2	-	2	1	2	77	55	132
HALDWANI													
Arjunpur	12	6	2	1	-	-	4	3	-	1	18	11	29
Dhanpur	7	6	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	10	7	17
Gangapur	3	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	9
Dungerpur	5	6	2	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	8	10	18
Kuarpur	8	10	7	4	-	-	2	4	-	-	17	18	35
Nayagaon Sambhal	5	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	7	12
Newal Khera	7	12	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	14	23
Khera	7	6	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	13	6	19
Lakhan Mandi	13	14	6	7	-	-	-	2	1	1	20	24	44
Mukhani	17	21	11	7	-	-	12	6	-	-	40	26	66
Himatpur Malla	17	21	11	4	2	-	21	11	3	-	54	36	90
Jawahar Jyoti	19	11	15	4	-	-	15	8	1	-	50	23	73
Dewalchour Khas	29	14	5	6	5	2	15	7	4	2	58	31	89
Fatehpur	9	16	3	5	-	-	1	1	-	2	13	24	37
Lohiya Sal Mella	14	11	3	1	3	1	12	8	1	-	33	21	54
TOTAL	172	155	69	48	16	3	84	51	11	6	352	263	615

Table 3.10 : Details of Enrolment in Class III in Sitapur District (1998)

District Block Village	Category of Students										Grand Total
	General		S.C.		OBC		Minority		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
HARGAON											
Surjipara	4	3	8	6	8	7	-	-	20	16	36
Gurdhapa	11	9	18	16	14	11	13	7	56	43	99
Bhanwapur	1	2	50	30	16	7	12	15	79	54	133
Mudikhera	5	13	32	36	3	1	6	6	46	56	102
Sadhwapur	5	1	27	12	3	1	1	3	36	17	53
Rahi	3	1	18	11	7	5	11	7	40	24	64
Navi Nagar	4	6	11	19	1	3	4	7	20	35	55
Ferozpur	11	10	4	3	-	-	-	-	15	13	28
Bherkhera	3	4	19	3	15	3	4	3	41	13	54
Kuti Kala	4	2	5	3	26	23	23	12	58	40	98
Salumaou	8	7	23	18	23	17	15	4	69	46	115
Mudrason	-	-	34	40	11	17	3	5	48	62	110
Udanapur	3	1	22	11	-	-	17	10	42	22	64
Pershera Mal	1	-	7	3	8	5	3	3	19	11	30
Seamri Bhan	-	-	6	2	-	-	22	12	28	14	42
Total	63	59	284	213	135	100	134	94	616	466	1082
LEHARPUR											
Leharpur I	9	-	5	3	11	1	20	3	44	7	51
Leharpur II	3	11	1	5	7	10	30	63	41	89	130
Gulripurwa	1	-	24	9	9	6	12	5	46	20	66
Ania Kala	8	2	16	19	5	1	11	6	40	28	68
Jitamaou	-	5	17	20	4	7	5	2	26	34	60
Kalyanpur	1	1	8	1	3	3	3	3	15	8	23
Kherullapur	-	-	24	6	7	8	1	1	32	15	47
Manpur	4	-	8	7	11	13	-	-	23	20	43
Akhbarpur	-	1	14	5	6	9	7	2	27	17	44
Ahirnpurwa	-	2	7	8	6	10	1	-	14	20	34
Naymupur	-	-	5	1	9	3	4	-	18	4	22
Taranpur	2	-	12	9	3	1	132	44	149	54	203
Basantipurwa	-	-	17	10	5	5	4	2	26	17	43
Bilaria	-	-	10	4	7	3	4	-	21	7	28
Dariyapur	-	-	8	2	19	32	9	5	36	39	75
TOTAL	28	22	176	109	112	112	243	136	559	379	938

Table 3.11 : Details of Enrolment in Class III in Sitapur District (1999)

District Block Village	Category of Students										Grand Total
	General		S.C.		OBC		Minority		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
HARGAON											
Surjipara	5	3	13	11	10	9	-	-	28	23	51
Gurdhapa	14	15	21	19	18	13	15	11	68	58	126
Bhanwapur	2	2	33	38	13	8	13	11	61	59	120
Mudikhhera	3	13	40	44	3	5	7	9	53	71	124
Sadhwapur	2	8	20	17	5	1	1	-	28	26	54
Rahi	9	7	21	15	8	6	13	9	51	37	88
Navi Nagar	10	12	3	11	1	2	11	9	25	34	59
Ferozpur	18	12	1	9	-	-	-	-	19	21	40
Bherkhera	3	1	13	4	12	5	12	12	40	22	62
Kuti Kala	3	4	32	24	6	7	66	41	107	76	183
Salumaou	7	6	16	25	22	18	22	13	67	62	129
Mudrason	-	--	38	28	7	4	5	1	50	33	83
Udanapur	3	2	21	7	5	-	62	48	91	57	148
Pershera Mall	2	1	6	6	9	6	4	1	21	14	35
Seamri Bhan	-	-	6	2	-	-	18	15	24	17	41
Total	81	86	284	260	119	84	249	180	733	610	1343
LEHARPUR											
Leharpur I	2	1	5	2	8	-	35	8	50	11	61
Leharpur II	2	7	3	4	6	13	37	31	48	55	103
Gulripurwa	4	3	33	22	18	20	15	8	70	53	123
Ania Kila	9	6	9	13	3	3	8	10	29	32	61
Jitamaou	6	-	28	22	9	4	5	2	48	28	76
Kalyanpur	-	-	4	5	5	2	4	-	13	7	20
Kherullapur	-	-	25	13	21	11	-	1	46	25	71
Manpur	1	1	6	9	5	9	-	-	12	19	31
Akhbarpur	-	-	13	5	12	9	5	4	30	18	48
Ahirnpurwa	1	1	10	12	9	12	1	1	21	26	47
Naymupur	-	1	2	3	9	3	2	-	13	7	20
Taranpur	-	-	-	-	2	1	132	54	134	55	189
Basantipurwa	-	-	18	18	7	7	-	4	25	29	54
Bilaria	-	-	12	6	12	10	4	-	28	16	44
Dariyapur	-	-	8	5	22	12	3	8	33	25	58
TOTAL	25	20	176	139	148	116	251	131	600	406	1006

Table 3.12 : Details of Dropouts in Class III in Haldwani Block

District Block Village	Category of Students										Grand Total
	General		S.C.		OBC		Minority		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
HALDWANI (1998)											
Arjunpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dhanpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gangapur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dungerpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kuarpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nayagaon Sambhal	-	-	6	1	1	-	-	-	7	1	8
Newal Khera	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Khera	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Lakhan Mandi	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	2
Mukhani	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Himatpur Malla	-	2	1	1	-	3	-	-	1	6	7
Jawahar Jyoti	-	2	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	7	7
Dewalchour Khas	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	3
Fatehpur	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Lohiya Sal Malla	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	3	3
TOTAL	2	6	8	7	1	9	1	-	12	21	33

HALDWANI (1999)											
Arjunpur	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Dhanpur	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Gangapur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dungerpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kuarpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nayagaon Sambhal	-	-	-	-	5	5	-	-	5	5	10
Newal Khera	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Khera	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lakhan Mandi	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Mukhani	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Himatpur Malla	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3	4
Jawahar Jyoti	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	2
Dewal Chour Khas	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	3
Fethpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lohiya Sal Mella	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	3
TOTAL	4	8	-	2	6	10	-	1	10	21	31

Table 3.13 : Details of Dropouts in Class III in Sitapur District (1998)

District Block Village	Category of Students										Grand Total
	General		S.C.		OBC		Minority		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
HARGAON											
Surjipara	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	4	4	8
Gurdhapa	1	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	3	4	7
Bhanwapur	-	-	2	2	1	1	-	-	3	3	6
Mudikhhera	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	5	5
Sadhwapur	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Rahi	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	2	2	4
Navi Nagar	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	4	4
Nayagaon Sambhal	1	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	3
Bherkhera	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Kuti Kala	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3	3
Salumaou	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	2	3
Mudrason	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	3
Udanapur	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Pershera Mal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Seamri Bhan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2	10	15	14	3	7	1	1	21	32	53
LEHARPUR											
Leharpur I	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	2
Leharpur II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gulripurwa	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	2	1	3
Ania Kala	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jitamaou	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Kalyanpur	-	-	1	-	2	1	3	1	6	2	8
Kherullapur	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	3	3
Manpur	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	3	-	3
Akhbarpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ahirnpurwa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Naymupur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Taranpur	-	-	-	1	-	-	6	-	6	1	7
Basantipurwa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bilaria	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	2
Dariyapur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	-	-	2	3	8	5	9	2	19	10	29

Table 3.14 : Details of Dropouts in Class III in Sitapur District (1999)

District Block Village	Category of Students										Grand Total
	General		S.C.		OBC		Minority		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
HARGAON											
Surjipara	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	3
Gurdhapa	-	-	2	2	2	2	-	2	4	6	10
Bhanwapur	-	-	2	3	-	1	1	1	3	5	8
Mudikhera	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sadhwapur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rahi	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	2	2	4
Navinagar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nayagaon Sambhal	1	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	1	5	6
Bherkhera	2	-	-	-	3	1	-	1	5	2	7
Kuti Kala	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3	1	4	5
Salumaou	2	-	6	2	9	6	2	-	19	8	27
Mudrason	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Udanapur	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	2
Pershera Mal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Seamri Bhan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5	1	11	15	14	12	5	10	35	36	71
LEHARPUR											
Leharpur I	2	-	2	-	-	-	3	2	7	2	9
Leharpur II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gulripurwa	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
Ania Kala	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jitamaou	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kalyanpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kherullapur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manpur	-	1	3	-	1	1	-	-	4	2	6
Akhbarpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
Ahirnpurwa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Naymupur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Taranpur	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	-	5	-	5
Basantipurwa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bilaria	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	2	1	3
Dariyapur	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	2
TOTAL	2	1	6	2	4	4	8	2	20	9	29

As far as the selected schools of Bhimtal block is concerned, the enrolment of students in Class III was found to be rather low. Among the schools the maximum strength among Class III students was 14 in the case of Ranibagh during 1998 and Pandey Gaon during 1999 (26 students). The least number of students found in Class III in any school was 4 in Jyolikot during 1998 and only 2 in Jyolikot in 1999. In all the schools surveyed by us the total strength of children in Class III taken together was only 134 during 1998 and 132 in 1999. During 1998 only two children, both girls, belonging to SC category in Pandey Gaon and OBC category in Sanguri Gaon dropped out before completing Class III. In 1999, however, there was not even one child who dropped out from our sample schools from Bhimtal block. In the case of schools from Bhimtal block the children enrolled were either from general population or the SC category. Only very few children belonged to ST, OBC or minority group.

The strength of children in Class III was much higher in the Haldwani block. In the schools taken together, 539 children were enrolled during 1998 and 615 during 1999. Total strength in any one school was as high as 92 and 90 during the two years respectively while the school having least number of children in Class III was found in Nayagaon Sambhal in 1998 and Gangapur during 1999. In both cases only 9 children were enrolled in the class. During 1998, 12 boys and 23 girls dropped out in our selected schools from Haldwani. A maximum of 8 boys and 8 girls among the dropout cases was from the Scheduled Tribes. In 1999 the number of children who dropped out decreased marginally to 31 comprising of 10 boys and 21 girls. In this case however 6 boys and 10 girls were OBC children. In Haldwani therefore, the overall dropout percentage was around 5 and 4 per cent in 1998 and 1999 respectively for boys and girls taken together. Among girls the corresponding figures for 1998 and 1999 were

around 8 and 7 respectively. This, therefore, goes to show that the number of children who failed to clear Class III was nil or negligible in Bhimtal and very low in Haldwani blocks of Nainital district (Table 3.12).

The schools of Sitapur had a much higher student strength in Class III (Table 3.10 and 3.11). During 1998, in all the schools taken together, the student strength was 1082 in Hargaon comprising of 616 boys and 466 girls and these included children from all categories except ST. Largest proportion of children were Scheduled Castes and they accounted for around 46 per cent of the total boys and girls. During 1999 the total number was still higher with 1343 students comprising of 733 boys and 610 girls. Once again the dominant group was that of Scheduled Caste children. Despite the fact that the number of students were sizeable the number of students dropping out was only around 5 per cent during each of the two years.

In the selected schools of Leharpur the strength of students was 938 during 1998. Out of these there were 559 boys and 379 girls. In this area Muslims are found in a large numbers so the strength of children is the highest from among Muslims although all categories of children are found enrolled in the schools except Scheduled Tribes. By 1999 the strength of students had gone up to 1006 of which 600 were boys and 406 girls. On a category-wise basis the Muslim children were in a greater proportion as was the case in the previous year. It was good to note that the dropouts in Leharpur were quite low at around 3 per cent during both the years (Tables 3.13 and 3.14).

Since the dropout in Class III is found to be quite low in the schools covered by us in the four blocks of Nainital and Sitapur districts we might say that some credit for this could be given to the VECS. As has been indicated already, we have selected those VECs, which are efficient. The survey of the VEC members brought out the fact

that they have been making efforts to reduce dropouts and increase enrolment and retention. The figures support their claim and so it may be appropriate to give them credit for their efforts.

To sum up, therefore, it may be pointed out that according to the teachers the different VECs have been constituted as per the norms laid down. Thus, we find that this response is in conformity with that received by the members of the VEC themselves. This gives an answer in the affirmative to our first objective in which we had wished to find out whether the formation of the VECs had been done according to the rules or not.

When we look at our objective related to the role played by the VEC in performing its duties with respect to spread of education it is found that the response of the teachers has not been very encouraging since only around 57 per cent feel that the VECs are performing their role satisfactorily. The reasons cited for this are that the VEC members are not really very interested in the educational development since most of them are political personalities and so do not take interest in attending the VEC meetings regularly. They have not done enough to see to it that shortage of teachers are removed. Thus, in the view of the teachers the VEC has been found wanting as far as the role of VECs is concerned and this is our third objective. However, around 73 per cent teachers express the opinion that the relationship between the teachers and VECs are good. Thus, our fifth objective related to the interface between teachers and VEC functionaries is fulfilled.

The teachers have expressed their views through which they feel the functioning of the VECs can be improved further.

In the next chapter we will now analyze the data which we have collected with the help of the schedules designed for the Parents and Guardians on one hand and Community Leaders on the other.

CHAPTER – 4

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE VILLAGE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In this chapter we will make an effort to analyze the information collected from the parents whose children are enrolled in the schools coming under the control of our selected VECs as well as the community leaders who reside in the villages. From each of the two categories we have selected two individuals from each VEC. One of the parents selected is from the general category while the second was selected from among SC/ST or OBC group. Similarly as far as the community leaders were concerned, we selected our sample from among those individuals who had either served in the capacity of a Village Pradhan earlier, or the person who had lost in the race for being a Village Pradhan, a member of the block development committee residing in the village or any other influential person of the village. The analysis for both the categories will be carried out separately.

PERCEPTION OF THE PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

It seems that the parents or guardians do not appear to be very satisfied with the VEC and its functioning. When asked to comment as to whether the VEC is able to promote education in the village, the perception of respondents saying 'yes' is only 49. Similarly, when they were asked to let us know whether the VEC has been able to solve the problems related to education the response was even lower at 45 per cent (Table 4.1). Between our two selected districts the guardians in Nainital, however, have a

relatively better impression. In the case of the Nainital district, the share of respondents who feel that the VEC has been able to promote education and have been useful in solving problems related to education was around 57 and 50 respectively, whereas the corresponding percentages in Sitapur were around 42 and 40 only. But even a 57 per cent response goes to show that the guardians expect much more from the VECs.

Table 4.1 : Guardians Views related to VEC and Its Functioning

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Is VEC able to promote education in the Village?</u>							
Yes	18	16	34	12	13	25	59
No	12	14	26	18	17	35	61
<u>Has VEC been useful in solving problems related to education?</u>							
Yes	13	17	30	11	13	24	54
No	17	13	30	19	17	36	66
<u>If No, what role can they play?</u>							
Give them sufficient funds	--	3	3	--	1	1	4
Make VEC members more aware and keep all trained	9	13	22	12	10	22	44
Proper cooperation among VEC Members	11	9	20	8	7	15	35
VEC members should take more interest in the school	1	6	7	5	5	10	17
<u>Does the School offer the following facilities to the children</u>							
<u>(a) Dress</u>							
Yes	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
No	30	30	60	30	30	60	120
<u>(b) Mid-day Meal</u>							
Yes	30	30	60	30	30	60	120
No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>(c) Books</u>							
Yes	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
No	30	30	60	30	30	60	120
<u>(d) Other Study Materials (Storybooks)</u>							
Yes	29	28	57	27	30	57	114
No	1	2	3	3	--	3	6
<u>(e) Scholarship</u>							
Yes	30	30	60	30	30	60	120
No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

The guardians were then asked to identify the ways and means through which VECs can be made more effective. The maximum number of respondents have expressed the opinion that this can be done by making the VEC members fully aware of their responsibilities through proper training and that there should be a proper coordination among the VEC members and that they should work as a team. In both the districts these were the aspects which were given top priority. The other suggestions were that if the VEC members can be motivated to take more interest in the schools and in education, things will improve. A very few respondents also have indicated that the funds at the disposal of the VEC is insufficient to bring about the desired change and so the funds must be increased adequately (Table 4.1).

It is also very clear from Table 4.1 that all the guardians are fully aware about the various facilities which are given to the children such as mid-day meal, scholarship and other study materials such as storybooks. One of the responsibilities of the VECs is to make people aware about the types of facilities, which their children can avail in the Parishad schools and the VECs have certainly been successful in achieving this objective.

Information with respect of the parent-teacher meetings was also obtained from the guardians and this is shown in Table 4.2. Only around 44 per cent respondents have said that parent-teacher meetings are being held. It may be recalled that as far as the teacher's response is concerned, around 94 per cent had reported that the parent-teacher meetings are being held regularly. This is, therefore, in striking contrast to what the parents have reported. We then probed into the matter in greater detail in order to clarify the situation. It was revealed that during the days when parents visit the school to collect monthly rations for their children, attend functions on the occasion of Independence Day or Republic Day, etc. the teachers also try to contact parents in

order to have discussions with them about the progress of their children. These are not technically parent-teacher meetings in the formal sense if we go strictly by the definition of the parent-teacher meetings, but the teachers have been of the opinion that they serve the purpose sufficiently because at least the parents are in school even if for a different reason. The teachers claim that if we call the parents specifically for the purpose of holding parent-teacher meetings then the participation of parents is very poor. However, while the parents have not been very happy over the regularity of the parent-teacher meetings, the type of discussion which are held during the meetings relate to problems connected with education, the need to motivate parents to improve the general environment and the educational environment, development of the school, etc. (Table 4.2). On the whole, therefore, we may say that whatever be the method of holding parent-teacher meetings, the objectives of these meetings are being met. It was also encouraging to note that around 58 per cent parents have said that the VEC members as well as the teachers are taking note of their suggestions. This response is over 61 per cent in the case of Nainital and 55 per cent in Sitapur.

Table 4.2 : Guardians Views about Parents-Teachers Meeting

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Are Parents-Teachers Meetings held regularly ?</u>							
Yes	10	15	25	18	10	28	53
No	20	15	35	12	20	32	67
<u>If yes, what is discussed</u>							
Problems related to education	10	9	19	6	6	12	31
Evaluation of the standard of education	--	6	6	4	1	5	11
Parents are asked to motivate children for environment and their education	4	9	13	3	6	9	22
About the development of the school	3	3	6	2	4	6	12
Other matters	--	4	4	6	2	8	12
<u>Do VEC Members and Teachers take note of your suggestions regarding teaching?</u>							
Yes	17	20	37	14	19	33	70
No	13	10	23	16	11	27	50

Table 4.3 : Perception of Guardians about Teachers

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Do Teachers come to school regularly?</u>							
Yes	25	20	45	15	13	28	73
No	5	10	15	15	17	32	47
<u>If Yes, do they teach properly?</u>							
Yes	25	18	43	14	12	26	69
No	--	2	2	1	1	2	4
<u>If No, what are the reasons?</u>							
Not very sincere towards their work	--	2	2	1	1	2	4
Other work too besides teaching keeps them over busy	--	2	2	1	1	2	4
Political links of teachers and active politics	--	2	2	1	1	2	4
The administration is indifferent	--	1	1	1	--	1	2

The perception of the Guardians with respect to regularity of teachers in attending school and in teaching is shown in Table 4.3. It is evident from the table that around 61 per cent guardians report that teachers have been coming to school regularly. This, therefore, goes to show that the percentage of non-regular teachers is fairly high as far as the opinion of guardians is concerned. Keeping in mind the fact that the village is a small place and the residents have a fairly clear picture of what is happening in the schools, we may say that some thing needs to be done to ensure that a higher percentage of teachers attend school regularly. However, out of the 73 guardians who have said that teachers are coming to school regularly, nearly 95 per cent feel that the teachers have been teaching properly. This is encouraging because if those attending school had neglected their teaching then things would have been even worse. Out of the very few guardians who have reported that the teachers do not teach properly, the reason cited by them for not doing so are that they are not interested, they have other responsibilities besides teaching and that the administration is not strict to ensure regular attendance and regular and proper teaching.

Table 4.4 : Guardians' View related to Education

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>What are your suggestions for increasing the spread of education among girls</u>							
No response	--	--	--	1	--	1	1
More stress on teaching a home science	4	6	10	8	2	10	20
Girls should not be discriminated	4	8	12	1	8	9	21
Motivate parents	21	19	40	10	16	26	66
Additional schools for girls and female teachers	4	2	6	4	2	6	12
Scholarship, teaching materials, dress, etc	5	16	21	15	14	29	50
<u>What are your suggestions for Universalization of Education?</u>							
No response	1	--	1	3	3	6	7
All facilities/scholarship, etc for all students	19	13	32	14	15	29	61
Better teaching methods	1	7	8	5	5	10	18
Increase number of teachers	2	3	5	2	3	5	10
English for class 1 st	4	3	7	2	2	4	11
Compulsory education and its publicity and increase environment	16	14	30	12	16	28	58
Parents-Teachers meeting regularly	2	1	3	1	1	2	5
VEC members should play their role honestly and efficiently	3	2	5	1	1	2	7
<u>What is the objective behind giving education to your children?</u>							
No response	--	--	--	--	1	1	1
To make them better citizens	14	12	26	11	13	24	50
To get service and contribute to household income	14	12	26	18	16	34	60
To increase the intellect of the child	15	14	29	10	8	18	47

Table 4.4(contd...) : Guardians' View related to Present Education System

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Are you satisfied with the present education system?</u>							
Yes	11	14	25	21	22	43	68
No	19	16	35	9	8	17	52
<u>If No, what improvements do you suggest?</u>							
No response	--	--	--	2	--	2	2
Vocational training needed	12	11	23	2	7	9	32
Increase No. of teachers and teaching equipments	4	9	13	--	1	1	14
Sanskrit and English	13	6	19	5	1	6	25
No Private institutions	2	3	5	--	--	--	5

The guardians' views related to the spread of education and achieving Universalization of Education were duly taken and the responses have been tabulated in Table 4.4. In most cases we have received a multiple response. As far as the suggestions for increasing the spread of education among girls is concerned around 55 per cent respondents feel that the best way is to motivate the parents in such a way that they can understand the role of the girls in society and the need for her education if she is to play her role effectively. The next most important suggestion, forwarded by around 42 per cent respondents was that there should be special provision for providing scholarships, teaching materials and uniform to the girls and this will provide the incentive for improving their enrolment as well as retention. Some of the other suggestions are that the girls should be given some education related to home science. This is something which the parents are likely to appreciate because in the rural areas in particular a lot of stress is laid on the fact that girls should be good at household work since this quality ensures that she will become a good housewife. Yet another aspect is that girls should not be discriminated against. It is interesting that this suggestion is coming from parents while it is the parents themselves who discriminate between boys and girls. However, this has been the response from those literate parents who are sending their daughters to school.

Even for achieving the goal of Universalization of Education the guardians feel that the two most effective ways can be providing incentives by way of scholarship, etc. to all children and making enrolment compulsory and by improving the overall educational environment. Both these responses have been suggested by around 51 and 48 per cent respondents respectively. Some other suggestions have also been made such as use of better teaching methods, increasing the strength of teachers, by introducing English from Class I itself, etc. But these suggestions are from relatively few guardians.

We even asked the guardians to identify the objectives behind sending the children to school. Exactly half the respondents said that education was being provided such that their children are able to get a job and make a positive contribution towards the income of the household. Around 42 per cent said that they hoped that their children would become better citizens by virtue of being educated and around 39 per cent felt that as a result of education the intellectual level of their children would improve (Table 4.4).

In response to our question as to whether or not they were happy with the present education system, around 57 per cent respondents expressed their satisfaction. Out of the remaining 43 per cent respondents the most important reason for being dissatisfied was they feel that even in the junior classes some initiation towards vocational training is required. Because of the spread of privately run educational institutions even in the rural areas it is observed that the craze for English medium and for Sanskrit to be taught has suddenly caught up. Thus parents feel that even the Parishad schools should introduce English from Class I and also teach Sanskrit. Another flaw pointed out in the present system is that schools have shortage of staff and proper teaching equipment and infrastructure. If these facilities are improved there will be a considerable improvement in the education system (Table 4.4).

In the end we had asked the guardians to express their opinion about the different types of problems which are faced by the VECs and the possible solution to those problems. The response is once again not single but multiple and is recorded in Table 4.5. It was observed that around 29 per cent respondents have not given any response as to the main problems faced by the VECs. The number is almost equally divided between the two districts surveyed by us. The main problem identified by the respondents in both the districts is that the VEC members are political persons mainly,

Table 4.5 : Guardians' View related to the Problems of VEC and its Solution

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Main Problems faced by the VEC</u>							
No response	7	11	18	6	11	17	35
Members do not attend meeting, awareness, politics	20	19	39	10	18	28	67
Lack of finances	9	18	27	7	9	16	43
VEC does not have enough power	2	4	6	2	3	5	11
Competition for Private schools	8	2	10	5	6	11	21
Education Deptt. does not care for the suggestion of VEC	1	3	4	4	1	5	9
Selection of VEC members not proper and untrained	3	4	7	12	4	16	23
<u>Solutions to the VEC Problems</u>							
No response	7	11	18	6	11	17	35
Create awareness	20	19	39	10	18	28	67
More fund should be provided	9	18	27	7	9	16	43
Increase the power of VEC	2	4	6	2	3	5	11
No Privatization of education	8	2	10	5	6	11	21
Greater co-operation from the Education Department	1	3	4	4	1	5	9
Proper selection of VEC members and trained	3	4	7	12	4	16	23

that they are not aware of their duties and responsibilities and so do not attend the VEC meetings regularly. The share of those persons who have given this as the main factor among those who have identified problems with the VEC, is around 82 per cent in both the districts taken together. However, in Nainital district the percentage is as high as around 93 per cent while in Sitapur it is around 65 per cent. The next most important problem, which has been identified, is the lack of finances with the VECs. On the whole, around 50 per cent guardians point out this problem, but the share in the case of Nainital is as high as 64 per cent. Two more factors pointed out are that the selection of VEC members is not proper and that the private schools are making competition rather tough for the Parishad schools and so the VECs become ineffective in bringing about the desired change in the schools run by the Parishad. Around one-fourth of the

respondents have identified these two problems. There are two more problems which have been identified but by only very few respondents. These are that the VECs do not have sufficient powers to bring about the desired result and that the suggestions made by the VECs are not given due consideration.

The problem itself gives the measures for solving these problems. As a result it is indicated by maximum number of respondents (82 per cent) that the VEC members should be made aware of the role which they are expected to play and once each is aware he/she will attend the VEC meetings regularly and contribute positively in bringing about the desired changes in the education system. Similarly the VECs should be given more funds so that they can ensure that schools under their supervision have the requisite facilities for creating a proper educational environment. The other suggestions are that appropriate persons should be made members of the VEC. The guardians were not in favour of promoting privately run educational institutions whose numbers have increased quite rapidly over the years. The guardians also feel that VECs should be vested with greater powers and that the officials of the education department should give due consideration to the suggestions offered by the VECs. If the education department is indifferent towards the suggestions the VEC members get disinterested and the effectiveness of the VEC is automatically reduced.

This in brief are the perceptions and views of the parents and guardians with respect to the education system, the teachers and the functioning of the VECs. We will not turn our attention towards the views expressed by the Community leaders surveyed by us.

VIEWS OF THE COMMUNITY LEADERS

The first thing which we wanted to assess was whether the community leaders had any awareness about the VEC and its functioning and if in their opinion the VEC had been constituted properly and the type of work which it had done in the past few years. Table 4.6 provides answer to these questions. It was good to see that there was a high degree of awareness among the community leaders about the VEC and its role. Around 50 per cent respondents said that the VEC is to ensure development of education in Parishad schools and another one-fourth added that they are expected to

Table 4.6 : Knowledge about VEC

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>What do you know about VEC</u>							
For the development of education in Parishad Schools	14	18	32	13	15	28	60
Maintenance of the School	10	6	16	9	7	16	32
Awareness about the education	6	2	8	3	6	9	17
Better education	5	3	8	6	5	11	19
Managing education in rural areas	1	3	4	4	5	9	13
Focus on girls education	3	2	5	1	1	2	7
Promotion of informal and adult education	1	1	2	2	1	3	5
To remove the bottlenecks in education	3	4	7	2	1	3	10
<u>What work has the VEC performed during the past few years?</u>							
Electrification	--	2	2	1	--	1	3
Construction of Toilet, drinking water	19	20	39	25	24	49	88
Construction and repair of building & playground	21	20	41	24	19	43	84
Beautification of school	2	7	9	1	7	8	17
Increase in enrolment	6	2	8	3	2	5	13
Improved the system of education	2	1	3	3	4	7	10
Distribution of mid-day meals, scholarship	--	--	--	1	2	3	3
<u>Has the VEC been constituted properly?</u>							
Yes	30	30	60	30	30	60	120
No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ensure proper maintenance of the Parishad schools. They have also said that the VECs are expected to create awareness about education, ensure better education by removing the bottlenecks in education and the overall management of education in the rural areas.

Every community leader surveyed by us has said that the constitution of the VECs has been proper. They have also identified the work, which have been performed by the VECs over the past few years (Table 4.6). The two most important functions performed by the VECs has been construction of toilets and provision of drinking water (73 per cent responses), construction and repair of school building (70 per cent responses). The other areas in which efforts have also been made by the VECs are electrification of schools, beautification of the schools, increasing the enrolment and improving the overall educational system. It is, therefore, very clear that our first objective related to proper constitution of the VECs is approved by the parents as well as the community leaders.

Speaking of community participation as far as educational activities of the VEC are concerned, the leaders feel that this co-operation is lacking since only 44 per cent respondents have replied in the affirmative (Table 4.7). In the case of Nainital this percentage was only 38 whereas in Sitapur it was 50 per cent. Those who felt that community participation was forthcoming have reported that the co-operation can be seen in the assistance provided to the VEC (49 per cent response) and in spreading awareness among the parents (38 per cent response). The other ways through which the local community helps the VEC is by motivating teachers to be regular and to teach properly, by exerting pressure on the Panchayat to work for improving educational facilities. However, only few respondents have identified these aspects.

Table 4.7 : Community Participation

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Does the Community Participate in the activities of the VEC in Education</u>							
Yes	9	14	23	14	16	30	53
No	21	16	37	16	14	30	67
<u>If Yes, in what way?</u>							
By assisting with VEC and Meeting	4	8	12	8	6	14	26
Through the Cooperation of Panchayat	4	3	7	1	2	3	10
Motivate teachers	1	1	2	2	5	7	9
Joint efforts through VEC and Panchayat	1	2	3	--	2	2	5
By spreading awareness among community	5	3	8	5	7	12	20
<u>If No, What is the reason?</u>							
This is the work of VEC alone	12	7	19	8	7	15	34
Lack of cooperation from people and interest	9	9	18	10	11	21	39
Poor people do not have a say	3	2	5	2	3	5	10
This is an administrative work	3	5	8	4	2	6	14

Those respondents who feel that community participation is lacking feel that spreading education and ensuring hundred per cent enrolment as well as retention is the job of the VEC alone (51 per cent response), that people do not show interest in activities of the VEC and so co-operation is not given (58 per cent response). These two aspects are most significant. However, two more reasons are cited although by only a few respondents. These are that the functioning of the VEC is an administrative work and people do not have any power and that the village has a high percentage of poor people who do not have a say in the matters and so can not co-operate effectively even if they want to do so (Table 4.7).

The community leaders are generally satisfied by the functioning of the VECs since around 61 per cent have expressed their satisfaction in this respect (Table 4.8). However, when we look at the two districts individually it is found that while 75 per cent

respondents were satisfied in Nainital, the corresponding percentage in Sitapur was only around 47. The dissatisfied persons feel that if the functioning of the VECs is to be improved, more efficient members should be appointed (49 per cent response), that they should take up construction work in the schools properly (45 per cent response), that the VEC members should be motivated to become aware of their duties and that the activities of the VEC must be properly monitored.

Table 4.8 : Satisfaction with working of VEC and Promotion of Girls Education

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Are you satisfied with the working of VEC?</u>							
Yes	27	18	45	15	13	28	73
No	3	12	15	15	17	32	47
<u>If No, give suggestions</u>							
Construction work should be done properly	2	6	8	7	6	13	21
VEC members elected should be efficient	2	7	9	8	6	14	23
Greater motivation of VEC members	1	4	5	3	5	8	13
Monitoring of VEC activities	1	4	5	3	4	7	12
<u>Has VEC made special efforts to promote education among girls, disadvantaged persons, backward class, etc.?</u>							
Yes	19	10	29	9	8	17	46
No	11	20	31	21	22	43	74

While the overall percentage of respondents who were satisfied with the functioning of the VECs was around 61 per cent, the corresponding percentage of respondents who feel that the VEC has been making special efforts to promote education among girls and children from the disadvantaged section of the population is only around 38 per cent. Even in Nainital less than 50 per cent respondents are satisfied while in Sitapur the share of satisfied community leaders is only around 28 per cent. It means that as far as the community leaders are concerned the role of the VEC

has been found lacking in the very crucial objective of spreading education in the village particularly among the girls and the SC/ST and OBC children (Table 4.8).

The community leaders were asked to express their views on the extent to which the VECs have been successful in maintaining the school building and the equipments which the schools have. Around 59 per cent respondents say that the VECs have looked after the repair and maintenance of the building and 60 per cent say that the equipment such as furniture, teaching material, etc. have been properly maintained. In many cases the VECs have taken active interest in the beautification of the school (49 per cent) and in ensuring regular white washing of the school building (45 per cent response). In some cases where the VECs have been very active and enterprising they have even managed to raise funds and get schools electrified as well. However, such cases are very few (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 : Maintenance of Building etc, by the VEC

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Has the VEC contributed towards the maintenance and repairs of School/Building, etc.</u>							
White washing	16	17	33	12	9	21	54
Beautification	20	17	37	12	10	22	59
Electrification	--	3	3	--	1	1	4
Repair and Maintenance	17	17	34	15	22	37	71
Equipment, furniture, tat-pattis, etc.	12	16	28	18	26	44	72
<u>Type of Relationship Between VEC and Teachers</u>							
Good	15	12	27	11	10	21	48
OK	15	18	33	19	20	39	72

The community leaders fail to see a cordial relationship between the VEC and teachers since only 40 per cent of the total respondents have reported the relation to be

good. The rest feel that they are OK. There is not much of a difference between the two districts selected by us for the study (Table 4.9).

The community leaders were asked to identify the various factors which result in dropouts among the children and whether they have done anything to try and reduce the incidence of dropouts. The responses received from the community leaders have been tabulated in Table 4.10. In all the cases we have received multiple responses. Four main factors have been identified as the cause of dropouts. These are economic, social, administrative and other reasons. Of these the economic reason has been pointed out to be most crucial by over two-thirds of the total respondents. These reasons include factors such as child labour, other economic activities at the household level and the fact that children who fail in Class III or IV are not eligible to get scholarships. The factor which is next in importance is the administrative lapses such as lack of proper facilities in the school including shortage of teachers, class rooms, playing facilities and the poor administration of the schools. Around 38 per cent respondents have identified administrative problems as a factor affecting dropouts. Social factors such as child marriages, discrimination against the girl child and orthodox nature of households are some of the social reasons which have been the cause of dropouts among the girls and around one-fourth of the respondents have talked of these social factors posing a bottleneck in ensuring that the retention level is high. Besides this there are other factors as well such as backwardness, family problems, non-availability of scholarships to children of general families etc. which also create a sense of indifference among the parents and so they stop taking proper interest in the education of their children (Table 4.10).

Half the respondents have stated that they have not made any effort to solve the problem of dropouts in their village. However, the only serious effort made by the rest

has been to motivate parents. The other method which they have also tried to adopt is to try and influence the VEC and administration and to carry out rallies in order to create awareness about education in the village. Some have even made an effort to get scholarship for students irrespective of their eligibility. However, because of the government policy they were not successful.

Table 4.10 : Reasons for Dropouts

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>What are the main reasons for dropout</u>							
Economic	14	18	32	26	24	50	82
Social	5	4	9	10	11	21	30
Administrative	12	4	16	17	13	30	46
Others	11	13	24	11	9	20	44
<u>What are you doing to remove this problem?</u>							
Doing nothing	14	15	29	18	13	31	60
Effort to get free books	3	3	6	1	2	3	9
Rally awareness about education and girls education	4	8	12	4	2	6	18
Efforts to get scholarship for all	3	2	5	1	4	5	10
Motivating parents	8	9	17	11	13	24	41
Through the administrative and VEC	7	6	13	5	4	9	22
<u>Have you received help from NGOs, Panchayat Members?</u>							
Yes	17	8	25	4	8	12	37
No	13	22	35	26	22	48	83
<u>If Yes, What type of help?</u>							
Rally	--	5	5	1	3	4	9
Motivating parents	5	3	8	1	5	6	14
Distribution of free book, scholarship, dress, etc.	12	--	12	2	--	2	14
Others	-	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>If No, Why?</u>							
No NGOs in village	5	12	17	13	11	24	41
No need	8	5	13	16	7	23	36
Lack of interest by Panchayat	3	10	13	7	6	13	26

In an effort to reduce the dropout rates around 31 per cent community leaders have approached the NGOs which are active in their village. The NGOs have been

helpful in organizing rallies, motivating parents and providing free books and uniforms. The fact that only 30 per cent respondents have sought help of NGOs is because in a large number of villages there are no NGOs. Where they do exist the community leaders have either not felt the need to approach them or because the Panchayat has not taken interest in the activities being organized by the NGOs (Table 4.10).

Table 4.11 : Have You Discussed the Educational Problems with Block/District Officials

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Have you discussed with Officials</u>							
Yes	12	18	30	14	12	26	56
No	18	12	30	16	18	34	64
<u>What Results?</u>							
No improvement	2	5	7	7	6	13	20
Teachers have become regular	6	12	18	4	5	9	27
Equipment, like science & maths kit etc. available	4	1	5	5	3	8	13
Appointment of Teachers (posting of Teachers)	2	1	3	3	1	4	7
Administration of the school improved	2	1	3	3	2	5	8
Construction of School building	7	4	11	1	4	5	16

The influential people of an area, particularly in the rural area can play a significant role in impressing upon the block or district level officials about the specific needs of the village in general and about education in particular. It was, therefore, decided to enquire about the role played by the influential people in this direction. It was sad to note that only around 47 per cent of our total respondents have made any effort to draw the attention of the officials about the educational requirements of their respective villages (Table 4.11). Even out of those who did make an effort slightly over one-third have reported that their efforts have been in vain since they could not bring

about the desired improvement. However, the main area in which improvement has been made is ensuring regularity of the teachers and availability of equipment such as maths and science kits. The positive responses in both these areas have been given by 48 and 23 per cent respondents respectively. One more aspect in which some improvement has been made is the construction of the school building (29 per cent response). To a small extent the efforts made by the community leaders has been that extra teachers have been appointed and that the general administration of the schools have improved (Table 4.11).

As far as the perception of community leaders about teachers and facilities in the schools is concerned, it was observed that only around 54 per cent of the total respondents have said that teachers come to school on time. Out of the remaining who report that teachers are irregular around 45 per cent have said that the VEC is not doing anything in this connection. The remaining however have said that administrative action is taken against them (Table 4.12).

Even with respect to availability of essential facilities in school only around 47.5 per cent respondents feel that essential facilities are available in the Parishad schools. The most serious concern has been shown by the community leaders about non-availability of boundary wall in the schools. The other deficiencies are shortage of class rooms and teachers and equipment such as furniture and tat-pattis. In a few cases complaint has been made about non-availability of drinking water and proper building. Some community leaders also feel that English should be taught from Class I itself as is the case with the privately run English Medium schools (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12 : Perception of Community Leaders about Teachers and Facilities in Schools

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Do teachers come in time?</u>							
Yes	19	18	37	15	13	28	65
No	11	12	23	15	17	32	55
<u>If No, what is the VEC doing?</u>							
Nothing	3	4	7	8	10	18	25
Administrative action	8	8	16	7	7	14	30
<u>Does the school have essential facilities?</u>							
Yes	23	19	42	9	6	15	57
No	7	11	18	21	24	45	63
<u>If No, which are required?</u>							
English from Class Ist	2	1	3	2	3	5	8
Drinking water	2	5	7	1	--	1	8
Boundary Wall, Play field, gate	6	5	11	15	19	34	45
Shortage of teachers	--	1	1	7	8	15	16
Shortage of class-rooms	--	2	2	5	6	11	13
No building	--	--	--	1	3	4	4
Furniture, tat-pattis	1	2	3	3	4	7	10

Finally we asked the community leaders to identify the problems faced by the VECs and the possible solutions which can help to overcome the problems (See Table 4.13). Around 8 per cent respondents feel that the VECs do not face any problem as such. However, among the problems identified the most important is lack of awareness and co-ordination among the VEC members specially where the members are illiterate as well (65 per cent response). Some of the other problems which have been highlighted are lack of interest among guardians about the education of their children, insufficient finances at the disposal of the VEC, lack of co-operation from the public, undue interference of the Panchayat and the Pradhan, selection of VEC members is not

proper and that the suggestions made by the VEC are hardly ever accepted and implemented by the officials of the education department.

Table 4.13 : Problems of the VEC and their Solution as viewed by Community Leaders

Particulars	Block		District Nainital	Block		District Sitapur	Districts Total
	Bhimtal	Haldwani		Hargaon	Leharpur		
<u>Problems Faced by the VECs?</u>							
No problems	3	2	5	1	4	5	10
Lack of awareness, literacy and coordination among VEC members	20	19	39	16	17	33	72
Lack of interest among guardians	3	3	6	4	6	10	16
Shortage of finances	4	3	7	4	10	14	21
Lack of cooperation from the public	2	2	4	3	4	7	11
Excessive influence of Pradhan and Panchayat	4	5	9	4	5	9	18
Choice of VEC members not appropriate so VEC is inactive	3	6	9	5	3	8	17
Officials of education Deptt. do not act on the suggestion of the VEC	1	3	4	1	2	3	7
<u>Solution to the Problems of VEC</u>							
Sufficient finances	4	3	7	4	9	13	20
Training needed and Education	14	15	29	18	16	34	63
Proper selection of VEC members	6	5	11	12	4	16	27
Members should take proper interest	2	2	4	4	2	6	10
VEC should be dis-attached from Panchayat	1	2	3	1	2	3	6
VEC members should be given some allowance	8	4	12	4	11	15	27
Female members to be motivated	1	3	4	6	8	14	18
Officials should look into the suggestion of VEC	1	--	1	3	1	4	5
Proper coordination of people	2	2	4	3	5	8	12

The community leaders have also suggested ways through which the problems faced by the VECs can be removed. The most important step which they feel must be taken is to provide proper training to the VEC members and to see to it that the selection itself is made of educated and appropriate persons. Around 57 per cent respondents have given this suggestion. The other suggestions are that the VEC should have more finances with them, the VEC members should be motivated properly so that they take interest in promoting education in the village, to give them incentive to

proper and that the suggestions made by the VEC are hardly ever accepted and implemented by the officials of the education department.

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Excessive influence of Pradhan and Panchayat	4	5	9	4	5	9	18
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work properly the VEC members should be given some allowances, there should be greater focus on the motivation of the female members of the VEC; that people must coordinate and offer greater co-operation in achieving the goals of the VEC; that the education department officials must look into the suggestions made by the VEC and implement those suggestions which will bring about qualitative improvements in education and that the VEC should be delinked from the Panchayat. However, the responses towards these suggestion have come from a relatively much smaller proportion of the respondents (Table 4.13).

On the basis of the analysis carried out so far we may conclude that both the parents and guardians as well as the community teachers have expressed the view that the VEC has been constituted in accordance to the prescribed norms. Thus the answer to our first objective has been in the affirmative.

Our second objective relates to whether the VEC has been able to enlist the co-operation of the local community. In this connection, the guardians have accepted the fact that the VEC has been successful in making people aware of the type of facilities which schools offer the children. The community leaders on the other hand feel that the VEC has not been very successful on this front.

Even with respect to the third objective it is seen that the parents are dissatisfied with the role of the VEC in promoting educational development since only 45 per cent guardians are happy with the working of the VECs. The community leaders, on the other hand, have shown much greater satisfaction in the working of the VECs (61 per cent leaders are satisfied). But even this percentage is not very high. Moreover, when efforts to promote education among girls and children from the disadvantaged group is

concerned, even the community leaders are dissatisfied as indicated by around 62 per cent respondents.

On the whole therefore we may say that despite the fact that selection of the VEC has been done in a fair manner keeping in kind the norms laid down for selection of VEC members, the VEC needs to put in a greater effort if it wants to achieve the goal of hundred per cent enrolment and retention, improving the quality of education and Unviersalisation of Education.

We will now present the views expressed by the ABSAs of the four blocks surveyed by us. It has already been pointed out that a small one page schedule was prepared for them as well and during the course of our field survey we also had discussions with them on the various aspects of education. The highlights of our discussions are being presented below.

- (i) As far as monitoring the educational activities of the schools under the ABSAs and co-ordination with the teachers is concerned, the ABSAs have expressed their inability to conduct monitoring on a regular basis because they have such a large number of schools under their jurisdiction. However, they say that they try their best and so what generally happens is that the schools which are on the road-side receive greater attention while those remotely located tend to get left out in the inspection process. Moreover, although they try their best to maintain a proper rapport with the teachers they have no power over them and so many a times the teachers pay little attention to the advice given by the respective ABSA. This is the report which is common to both our selected districts;
- (ii) When we discussed about the utilization of resources, the ABSA of Nainital pointed out that all resources which are made available under the World Bank

assistance are provided to the concerned BRCs and schools and they are directed to make best utilization of these resources. They also make inspections to see whether proper utilization is being done or not. The ABSAs of Nainital are satisfied with the way these resources are being utilized. In Sitapur, on the other hand, the ABSA of Hargaon is dissatisfied and his observation is that the BRC is providing these resources to only selected NPRCs and the NPRCs in turn are passing them on to only a few selected schools. Thus, children of other schools are deprived of these resources such as science and maths kits, etc. The ABSA of Laharpur on the other hand is satisfied with the way the resources are being used.

- (iii) In response to the regularity of teachers the ABSA of Bhimtal has pointed out that some schools are overstaffed. These are mainly the roadside schools. Consequently, the teachers tend to be irregular. In Hardwani and Laharpur blocks of Nainital and Sitapur respectively the ABSAs are happy with the regularity with which teachers attend school and deliver lectures. In Hargaon the teachers come every day but do not stick to the school timings.
- (iv) The scheme of mid-day meal is in operation in all the four selected blocks but the Parishad does not make any provision for the supply of free books and uniforms. However, some storybooks are being distributed under the World Bank aid.
- (v) The ABSAs have not fixed any specific day to hold meeting with the teachers. It is generally held on the occasion when meetings are held in the NPRC. However, the ABSA of Laharpur has reported that he holds meetings with teachers every month as far as possible.

- (vi) When the ABSAs were asked to give their views related to the meetings held by VECs and discussions during the meetings the ABSA of Hargaon has expressed his ignorance about what is discussed. The other ABSAs have pointed out that during VEC meetings issues related to education, infrastructure of the schools, scholarship to students and mid-day meal, sports activities, performance of teachers and their transfer are some of the issues taken up during discussion. The ABSAs have further pointed out that only few VEC members attend the meeting and that they expect some payment for attending these meetings.
- (vii) With respect to the performance of the BRCs the ABSAs of Nainital district have expressed satisfaction. The BRCs are taking care of distributing various study material provided by the World Bank and training of teachers. Even ABSA Laharpur has viewed the same opinion about the BRC. In Hargaon the ABSA reports that while the BRC gets all relevant material and that it is also distributed upto the NPRC level but after that the distribution system is improper and so the benefits are not received by all schools evenly.
- (viii) In both Bhimtal and Haldwani blocks of Nainital the teacher-student ratio is in conformity with the prescribed norm of 40 students per teacher. In the case of the two blocks of Sitapur, on the other hand, the ratio is adverse. In fact some schools of Hargaon are not functioning since they do not have teachers.
- (ix) The only role which the teachers' Union plays in the opinion of the ABSAs is to protect the interest of the teachers. They do not take any interest in the overall improvement in educational facilities.
- (x) The ABSAs have expressed their inability in contributing positively towards strengthening the relationship between teachers and guardians. Similarly they

have not been successful in ensuring the co-operation of the people towards achieving the goal of Universalization of Education.

- (xi) The VEC itself is unable to communicate the educational innovations to the teachers. This is done only with the help of the training programmes held for the teachers.

The ABSAs have therefore pointed out that they are trying their best to work within their given limitations. They have limited powers, and the number of schools under them are far too many to be able to do justice to all the duties which they have to perform.

CHAPTER – 5

EFFICIENT VECs : TWO SUCCESS STORIES

It had been decided that from each of the two districts selected by us we would identify one VEC whose performance has been noteworthy during the past few years and its efficient functioning would be highlighted in order to point out what is expected from each VEC if it is to fulfil its duties earnestly. It was with the help of the ABSAs of the four selected blocks that efficient VECs were identified for our general survey as well as for presenting the case studies. Once the special category VEC was identified from each district then information about the commendable work achieved by them was collected with the help of discussions held by the Headmaster and Teachers of the school, community leaders in the village and the parents and guardians whose children are studying in the Parishad schools falling within the purview of the VEC in question. These case studies are being presented in this chapter briefly.

1. **TIRCHA KHET VEC, Bhimtal Block, District Nainital**

The village of Tircha Khet is located approximately 6 kms. from the township of Bhimtal. It is not properly connected by pucca road and a stretch of around 2 kms. has to be covered by a *kutchha* road. There is a primary and a junior basic school within the village which is run by the Basic Shiksha Parishad. The village does not have any other privately run school. There is a sainik school located in Ghorakhal at a distance of around 5 kms. from Tircha Khet. The Block Resource Centre and DIET are located at an approximate distance of 3.5 and 7 kms. respectively.

Tircha Khet is a relatively large sized village in comparison to general villages in the hills and has a population of around 2600 persons. The population is loaded heavily in favour of scheduled castes and their share in the total population is very close to being two-thirds. By virtue of the dominance of the SC population the village panchayat is headed by a Pradhan, Shri Dhani Ram Arya, who too is a member of the same community. Being the Pradhan he automatically became President of the VEC as per the constitution of the Village Education Committee. Despite the pre-dominance of the SC population it was very encouraging to find that a high percentage of the total population in the village is literate.

The strength of teachers in the primary school is three and that of the junior basic school is four. In the former all teachers are females while in the latter all are males. The village also has a functioning *Aanganwadi* and it has the services of a female teacher.

The VEC has been conducting awareness campaigns regularly all over the village through which the village community is appraised about the benefits of education and the commitment of the government towards achieving the goal of Universalization of Education. As a result of these efforts all children in the school-going age group is enrolled in school. The Pradhan is himself taking personal interest in these awareness campaigns and so even the other VEC members have been influenced to extend their co-operation in this regard.

Till only a few years ago this village too was faced with the problem of dropouts. However, since this Village Education Committee has taken charge of things, the members have been successful in motivating the parents sufficiently to ensure that all

children enrolled in the school continue with their studies. Consequently it is observed that since the last few years the dropout cases have completely stopped.

The VEC has made special efforts to ensure that teachers attend school regularly and also teach regularly. It was very encouraging to note that despite the fact that six out of the seven teachers do not reside within the village, they have been coming to school daily on time and leave only after completing their teaching assignment. Teachers who live outside are commuting daily from places like Bhawali, Haldwani and Nainital. This has been possible only because of the concerted efforts of the VEC in general and the Pradhan in particular.

It was a pleasing sight to see that the buildings of both schools have been very well maintained by the VEC and white washing and painting are carried out on a regular basis. Moreover, the school campus has a proper 3 feet height boundary wall to ensure that cattle do not enter the school compound. Not only is the school building well maintained, the VEC has taken care to see to it that the entire campus is well maintained. For this flowerbeds have been laid and flowers and some trees have been planted. The school receives water through piped water supply and the VEC has managed to raise resources to construct a water tank in which water is stored. The schools have well maintained toilets as well. There is, however, shortage of classrooms. For a constructing additional classes the VEC does not have the requisite fund. But it is making efforts to obtain some additional funds.

In order to make teaching more interesting the VEC has given instructions to the teachers to make regular use of the science and maths kits. For maintaining a proper teaching atmosphere within the school no outsiders are allowed unless they have some specific work. The teachers have been entrusted the responsibility of keeping out

unwanted persons and they have been very strict in not allowing people to enter the school campus without any reason. However, all parents and other people are invited to school on the occasion of national festivals such as Independence Day, Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanti, etc. Because of the regular visits by parents a bond has been established between the teachers and guardians as well as other villagers and so they extend their co-operation whenever the school makes a request.

Despite the fact that the total funds at the disposal of the VEC are limited, it keeps making an effort to see to it that the requirements of the school are not left unattended as a result of the paucity of funds. Whenever the school is in need of something specific the VEC holds its meetings to deliberate over the demand. Once it is convinced that the demand is genuine it goes out of its way to raise funds with the help of the people to provide the facility to the school.

The functioning of the VEC is facilitated to a considerable extent by virtue of the fact that the village has a high level of literacy. Consequently the level of awareness among the people is also high. Thus the VEC is able to get the full co-operation of the people. They not only contribute willingly towards the financial requirements of the school as far as possible but also put in physical labour in the repair and maintenance of the school building when required.

The rules say that the meetings of the VEC should be held once in every month. This is not always possible to achieve because of the fact that the VEC members have other pre-occupations as well. Thus, meetings are generally held once in three months. However, in order to ensure that the work of the schools do not suffer, the Pradhan and the Headmaster hold meetings every month to ensure that all routine work is taken care of. They keep the other members informed about the school.

To sum up, therefore, we may say that the VEC, as a result of its dynamic Pradhan and efficient Headmaster, has done enough work within the village to create a proper environment for education and the positive results of their efforts are for everyone to witness.

2. **GULARI PURWA VEC, Laharpur Block, District Sitapur**

Among the VECs of Laharpur block, the Gulari Purwa VEC is the best functioning VEC. The total population of the village is around 4000. There is a mixed population from the point of caste-wise break-up. Around 38 per cent are OBCs and another 30 per cent constitute of SC. There are around 18 per cent Muslims and the rest belong to the general caste. This is a remote village located around 15 kms. from the BRC. It is not on a regular bus route since pucca road has not been constructed as yet. Thus people have to use private means of conveyance. However, the metal road is presently under construction.

The village has one primary and one junior basic school run by the Parishad. The primary school was set up in 1987 while the other in 1995. The student strength in these two schools is 332 and 223 respectively. Despite the fact that there are over 300 children in the primary school it has only one teacher since the last three years. In the junior basic school there are four teachers.

The Village Pradhan is Shri Ram Prakash Verma heads the VEC as its Chairman and the Headmaster Shri Muneshwar Dayal Verma has recently been transferred and the school has an acting headmaster presently. The total strength of the VEC members is ten.

Despite the fact that the primary school has over 300 students and only one teacher, it goes to the credit of the VEC that enrolment is 100 per cent. Even in the junior basic all children in the school going age group are enrolled. This has been possible because of the untiring efforts made by the Pradhan and his team as well as the teachers. Moreover it is equally encouraging to note that there are no cases of dropouts either at the primary level or at the level of junior basic.

The teachers are very regularly attending the school and have been teaching well despite the heavy workload caused by shortage of staff. The VEC has been making repeated requests for additional teachers but so far the Basic Shiksha Parishad is concerned it has failed to provide extra teachers. The VEC is so strict as far as timely attendance of teachers is concerned that it marks teachers absent if they come to school after 10.30 AM but they have to fulfil their teaching assignments for that day.

Keeping in mind the regularity with which teachers are imparting education and the overall atmosphere children even from the adjoining village are coming over to Gulari Purwa junior basic school to seek admission.

Both the buildings of the primary as well as the junior basic section are very well maintained. At present the boundary wall is not fully constructed. Yet the VEC has taken measures to ensure that neither stray cattle come into the school compound nor unwanted persons. The outsiders are not even granted permission to take drinking water from the hand-pump within the premises of the school. Both schools have well maintained toilets as well.

In the case of Class VI the VEC collected extra fund to provide furniture for the children. At present a similar move is being made to raise funds and provide furniture in

Class VII and VIII. The VEC made special efforts to get an extra room constructed in the primary school with the help of funds received under the World Bank aid.

The VEC has taken care to ensure that science and maths kits are available in the school and that teachers make use of them while teaching both the subjects.

This is an ideal village from the point of view of co-ordial relationship between teachers and parents, VEC members and teachers as well as VEC members and parents. The parents are invited to the school on various festive occasions and even otherwise and a rapport has been established which ensures the people's co-operation whenever it is required. Even the understanding between teachers and VEC members is highly commendable.

While the VEC has been enjoying such a good relationship with teachers as well as parents, it has not been receiving the due co-operation from the office of the Basic Shiksha Adhikari. The VEC has repeatedly been requesting for additional teaching staff for the the primary school in particular and even for the junior basic school. However, their request has fallen on deaf ears so far and the ABSA is aware of this genuine problem. Running the primary school with only one teacher is providing very difficult and yet the school has been doing well. The SDIs and ABSAs have been inspecting these schools regularly. They sympathize with the teachers but are unable to meet their demands. This is primarily so because there is a general shortage of teachers all over the entire-district.

While the junior basic school was being constructed the land provided by the Parishad was not sufficient and the Pradhan willingly gave his land which was adjacent to the proposed site. Then efforts were made to raise funds from the public and the public also provided manual labour to level the land and convert it into a playground.

It is primarily on account of the fact that the Pradhan is active and very honest that the VEC has been functioning so well and the influence of the Pradhan has even had its impact on the other VEC members and so they too are equally keen on the developmental activities of the schools.

The VEC meetings are held regularly every month in the school itself and all the 10 members make it a point to attend these meetings. As a result of its exceptional performance this VEC was rewarded in 1998. The award was given for completing the construction of additional room within 90 days, to the specifications and within the allotted funds. Besides this the hand-pumps was installed and toilet constructed within a short period of 15 days.

Not only is the junior basic school population because of the good quality of teaching but also because the children have the opportunity to join boy scouts and play games.

As was the case in the earlier case study, even in Gulari Purwa the efficient working of the VEC is the result of having a dynamic Pradhan who has been successful in motivating his entire team to take interest in the activities of the school and deliver good results.

In the end we may, therefore, conclude that the mere formation of the Village Education Committee, providing them funds and defining their duties does not guarantee its smooth functioning. If the VEC is headed by a person who has vision and understands the need for educational development he can then go out of his way to get the co-operation of the rest of the team members, he can motivate the parents to ensure hundred per cent enrolment and zero dropouts among the children. A dynamic President of the VEC can also be successful in raising funds over and above what the

VEC receives from the government and invest it according to the priorities of the school. In short, therefore, we may say that a good leader can make the best out of the resources at his disposal and the key to the success of a VEC lies in the individual heading the committee.

CHAPTER – 6

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is essential to have a proper administrative machinery of the government to run any institution, but the success of any programme largely depends on the people's participation. In the case of spread of education in the rural areas at the primary and junior basic level the Village Education Committee has been formed since it was felt that the VEC will be able to ensure people's participation in building a congenial environment in support of education at the village level leading to higher enrolment as well as retention and improved achievement level along with better participatory management of the school at the community level. The VEC is headed by the Village Pradhan who heads the village Panchayat. The headmaster of the school is the member secretary and other members include one female and SC/ST member elected to the Panchayat and some more members. In all the VEC comprises of around 12 members. The strength of VEC members have altered over the years and so have their functions. The main functions and responsibilities of the VEC are to bring about improvement in educational facilities, to ensure full enrolment and to minimize dropouts, to take special care in the enrolment of the girl child and children from the disadvantaged group, to utilize funds for construction of additional rooms, toilets and provision of drinking water. All these functions aim to achieve the ultimate goal of Universalization of Education. It is envisaged that the VEC will hold its meetings once every month. In order to ensure that the VEC members are fully aware of their role and responsibilities they are given training for a three-day period during which they are made aware of the syllabus and activities other than teaching. They are familiarized

with the concept of micro planning and trained to draw up Village Education Plans and school mapping. By entrusting these responsibilities to the VEC it is hoped that the members of the Committee will be able to gain the confidence of the village community and execute their responsibilities fruitfully.

The general impression about the VECs is that meetings are not held regularly and that the main focus is on utilization of the finances at the disposal of the VEC. Because of their attitude not much improvement is observed in the quality of education in general. The State Institute for Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT), Allahabad, expressed its desire to conduct an evaluation of the VECs and so the Gird Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow proposed to undertake such a study to find out the extent to which the VECs have achieved their objectives and to identify those problems which have hampered their success. The broad objective of the study were:

- (a) to find out whether the VECs have been constituted as per the norms laid down;
- (b) to study the extent to which VECs have been able to enlist the co-operation of the local community;
- (c) to study the role of the VECs in educational development of the villages;
- (d) to study the role of VECs in motivating the community in the opening and construction of new schools;
- (e) to study the interface between parents, teachers and the VEC functionaries; and,
- (f) to suggest policy implications in the light of the relationship between the VECs and functioning of the schools.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DESIGN

It was proposed to undertake the study in two UPBEP districts. The districts selected were Nainital and Sitapur, which are the highest and lowest literacy districts

among the UPBEP districts. From each district we then selected two blocks out of which one was relatively remote and the other close to the district headquarter. The blocks which were suggested by the officials in the office of the Basic Shiksha Adhikari and the Principal, DIET were Bhimtal and Haldwani in Nainital and Hargaon and Laharpur in Sitapur.

From each block fifteen efficiently run VECs were selected with the help of the ABSA incharge of each block. Thus our sample covers a total of 60 VECs from the two districts. For collecting primary information it was decided to have four sets of schedules for :

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) VEC Members | Sample of four from each VEC |
| (b) Teachers | Sample of two from each school |
| (c) Parents | Sample of two from each village |
| (d) Community leaders | Sample of two from each village |

The total sample covered included 240 VEC members and 120 from each of the other three categories thereby making a total sample of 600 persons. The study, therefore, is the outcome of analysis carried out with the help of information received from these 600 schedules.

Besides the primary information we also collected some secondary information from the selected districts and blocks in order to have an idea of the situation of primary education as existing in our selected districts.

We will now briefly present the highlights of the findings of the study.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

We shall try and discuss the findings of our survey in the order of the specific objectives, which had been laid down at the time when the study was conceived of.

Our first objective relates to the formation of the VEC. It has already been pointed out that there are certain rules to be followed at the time of selecting the VEC members. Some are automatically selected while others are nominated. It was our effort to find out whether the selections were carried out keeping in mind the prescribed norms. The VEC members interviewed by us unanimously agreed that the selection of VEC members was done strictly in accordance to the rules laid down. Even all the teachers were in agreement with the fact that there has not been any violation of rules in the selection of the VEC. The views expressed by the VEC members as well as the teachers were confirmed by the fact that the parents as well as community leaders, which were surveyed by us were satisfied with the formation of the VEC. However, what has been indicated is that while due consideration has been given to give proper representation to each category of individuals such as one female member elected to the Panchayat and an elected Panchayat member from among the SC/ST group, the Pradhan has nominated those who were close to him. The feeling is that if the Pradhan had been fair the selection could have been of even more deserving members in the Village Education Committee.

As far as the second objective is concerned it was to find out the extent to which the VEC has been able to enlist the co-operation of the local community. On this front even the members of the VEC themselves feel that they have received partial success only since around 53 per cent respondents have reported that they have succeeded in gaining the cooperation of the local community. The reasons which have been cited for the lack of cooperation are lack of interest among parents, lack of awareness among

people, and that some people are far too busy to be able to spare time for the VEC. Even the community leaders feel that the VEC has not been very successful on this front. Interestingly, however, the parents are far less critical and feel that the VEC has been successful in creating an awareness among people about the different facilities which their children can avail in the Parishad schools. The VEC members have been striving to see to it that they can motivate the local community sufficiently such that they may be able to perform their functions smoothly. However, there is need to put in greater efforts.

The third objective of our study is probably the most crucial and acts as the litmus test for the VECs and their functioning. The objective relates to the type of role played by the VECs in the educational development of the village as seen in terms of enrolment, retention, etc. As far as the assessment of the VEC members is concerned they are happy over the fact that their efforts have given positive results and the enrolment rates have increased and along with it the dropout rates have also been controlled. A very high percentage of VEC members have also pointed out that as a result of efforts made by them the teachers have been attending school regularly and teaching as per the timetable. The teachers on the other hand do not feel very happy over the role played by the VECs in the spread of education. The reasons cited by them for their poor performance are that the VEC members are mainly Panchayat members and are individuals with a political inclination. They are, therefore, hardly interested in educational development. One very strong complaint made by the teachers particularly in Sitapur district has been that the VEC has not done anything to ensure that the strength of teachers be increased upto the minimum requirement. The argument put forward by the VEC members to counter this criticism is that they can at the most make a request for additional teachers. The teachers will ultimately be

provided by the Basic Shiksha Parishad. Even the parents are not very satisfied with the role of the VEC since 55 per cent parents have expressed their dissatisfaction in this regard. They feel that with respect to spread of education among girls and the disadvantaged group the VECs role has been even more unsatisfactory.

Our fourth objective was to study the role of the VEC in motivating the community in the opening and construction of new schools. Since our selection of VECs was based on the criterion of efficiently functioning VECs as identified by the respective ABSAs of the four selected blocks we had in our sample those VECs which did not have to make an effort towards the opening of new schools. However, what is quite evident has been that the VECs have certainly made efforts to see to it that facilities like drinking water and toilets is made available where they do not exist and in a few cases they have also been successful in obtaining funds for the construction of additional classrooms in the school, construction of boundary walls and for the levelling of play - fields. Some VECs have even been able to raise additional funds to get the schools electrified.

Our final objective was to study the interface between parents and teachers and VEC functionaries. In general the picture which is emerging is that the VECs are themselves not very happy over their role as far as establishing a proper rapport with the local community and parents is concerned. They have certainly been successful in motivating parents into increasing the enrolment rates and reducing dropout rates. They have also done enough good work to obtain the cooperation from the people in the construction and repair and maintenance of the school. For this the people have contributed financially as well as they have offered their manual labour. But the VEC members feel that they have not received the full confidence and cooperation of the people because of their lack of interest and indifferent attitude. The VECs have

however been successful in motivating teachers to be regular in attending school as well as in their teaching. The teachers on the other hand feel that the VEC has not fought sufficiently with the authorities over their genuine problems related to shortage of teachers. As far as teachers and parents are concerned the best way of developing cordial relationship is through the parent-teacher meetings and by door to door motivation of the parents by teachers particularly at the time when Bal Gadna process is on. With respect to parent-teachers meeting there is some difference of opinion between teachers and parents. Teachers feel that although parent-teacher meetings are not being held every month, they are being held once every three months or once in six months at least. Parents on the other hand have reported that when parents are invited to school on National Holidays and other occasions then only are they able to discuss the educational problems of their children. In the opinion of the parents these occasions should be kept separate and not be treated as the occasions to hold parent-teachers meetings as well. The teachers counter this argument by saying that when special need arises they do call the specific parents to point out the difficulties of the child to them. They also strongly feel that if these meetings are to be held regularly every month the parents themselves will not be attending them in full strength. That during a festive occasion like a National Holiday almost all parents are in school and this provides the best opportunity to the teachers to meet all parents.

In the light of the findings stated above we will now make an effort to offer some suggestions which will prove useful in making the functioning of the VECs more efficient.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The strength of the VEC is presently of twelve members. This is too large and needs to be suitably reduced. It is primarily because of its awkward size that its meeting can neither be held regularly nor do all members find it convenient to attend the meetings of the VEC. It is generally felt that its strength should be reduced by half to six members only. They should include the Pradhan as its Chairman and the Headmaster as its Member Secretary. In villages which have a primary as well as the junior basic school, both headmasters should be members and the senior of the two to be the Member Secretary. The other three members should include one community leader, one SC/ST parent and one female whose child is enrolled in school. In case the village has only one school a retired headmaster or teacher should be nominated. As far as possible care should be taken to select people who are literate since they can easily understand their duties and responsibilities and also motivate the local community more effectively.
- (2) Experience of the VECs surveyed by us clearly points out towards the fact that it is impractical to hold the VEC meetings on a monthly basis. It will therefore be much more appropriate to hold meetings once in three months. However, the President and Member Secretary must meet every month to take care of routine matters. As far as matters of importance are concerned, they should be discussed only when the VEC meets in full strength and a final decision should be taken after deliberating over the issue in detail.
- (3) The VEC must ensure that the minimum facilities such as provision of drinking water, toilets and boundary wall are made available. Boundary wall in particular

is an essential need because in its absence problems of security, tress passing and entry of stray cattle create a nuisance.

- (4) Presently the VEC members are being given training for three days and this duration is quite insufficient keeping in mind the fact that besides making them familiar about their responsibilities. They are also familiarized about concepts such as Micro Planning, Village Education Plan and School Mapping. In the light of the fact that the educational level of some members will be quite low three days is not enough for the members to comprehend what was taught and then be able to implement these plans. It might not be feasible to have a long duration-training programme but the Parishad can certainly think of more than one short duration training camps where at a time only one or two concepts are explained. Moreover, the timings of these programmes should be fixed in accordance with the convenience of the VEC members.
- (5) Every year at least once a day long brain storming session should be conducted where all the Presidents and Member Secretaries of the VECs from a block must gather and discuss the various problems which they have been facing and the solution which the members found to those problems. This exchange of ideas will be extremely fruitful in achieving the goal of Universalization of Education. During these meetings it should be mandatory for the respective ABSA to be present and to take note of the problems highlighted. The ABSA should ensure that some solution is found to the genuine problems of the VECs.
- (6) The schools receive funds under the World Bank assistance for construction work. A proper plan of the Civil construction work has been prepared and it is expected that these specifications will be adhered to. Thus, the VEC must

monitor the construction work and ensure that the quality control measures are adopted. Once the work is over the Parishad should give its final clearance.

- (7) Despite the fact that a reasonable degree of success has been achieved by the VECs in ensuring a higher enrolment rate and in reducing the dropout rates, there is still room for improvement. In order to motivate parents and make them fully aware about the benefits of education the VECs must make greater efforts to promote awareness with the help of rallies, poster campaigns, appropriate film shows, puppet shows, street shows and other audio-visual publicity on a regular basis to ensure that the ultimate objectives of the VEC are achieved. Although these methods are already being adopted there is still scope for additional effort. The co-operation of the various NGOs working in the villages can be taken to meet this end.
- (8) The existing pattern of holding parent-teacher meetings needs to be re-organized and regularized. It is not feasible to hold these meetings every month because parents are unlikely to attend them on a regular basis. These meetings should, therefore, be held once in every three months and that too keeping in mind the convenience of parents. Thus, the sowing and harvesting seasons should be avoided. The present practice of holding these meetings on occasions when parents are present in school in connection with a National festival should be discontinued. This is so because parent-teacher meetings are the best way of ensuring a proper rapport between parents and teachers. The parents can not only be appraised of the problems which their children are facing but they can also be convinced into motivating other parents as well.

- (9) While the mid-day meal scheme has been conceived of to give incentive to parents and ensure hundred per cent enrolment of children in the school going age group, the scheme has a darker side as well. In the first place children who are not even 6 years old are being enrolled in the greed of 3 kgs. rations per month. This is adversely affecting the teacher-student ratio. Moreover, a large number of these small children remain absent on a regular basis but there is a constant pressure on the teachers not to make their attendance below 80 per cent. In case attendance is below 80 per cent in a month the child is not eligible to his quota of monthly rations. The VEC must look into it that only children in the school going age group are granted admission and that their attendance is at least 80 per cent before they get their monthly quota of ration.

Besides this it is only fair that the scheme of scholarships should be given on economic considerations as well. Given the government policy it is all right if children of a deprived section are being given scholarship, but even those children from the general population whose parents are below the poverty line should be eligible for scholarships.

- (10) The VECs have not been successful in focussing attention on the problems of the girl child or children from the disadvantaged group. The neglect of the girl child even today is one of the main reasons as to why the goal of hundred per cent enrolment has not been achieved. During the training period the VEC members must be properly appraised of this problem.
- (11) The funds at the disposal of the VEC are insufficient keeping in mind the overall needs of a school. Many a times decisions taken by the VEC have to be kept in abeyance because of non-availability of funds. It is not necessary that the

amount of funds be raised but whenever the VEC needs money for a genuine purpose the office of the Basic Shiksha Adhikari must give due consideration to it and release the requisite funds.

- (12) Not only does the VEC have certain responsibilities with respect to providing proper quality education but also it is equally important that the VEC should tackle social problems which plague the rural areas such as child labour, child marriage, and discrimination against the girl child. These social evils contaminate the environment in general and prevent the creation of a congenial atmosphere for education.
- (13) The VECs are presently not playing an active role in micro planning, chalking out the Village Education Plan and school mapping. These are the important functions which a VEC should be performing. Besides the stress on these aspects during the training of VEC members, the ABSAs should keep up pressure on them to carry out these activities as well.
- (14) The co-ordination between the VEC and the Panchayat is not ideal at present despite the fact that both these institutions are being headed by the same individual – the Village Pradhan. A large number of problems automatically get sorted out wherever a proper relationship exists. There is, therefore, need to adopt suitable means to ensure that proper co-ordination is maintained.
- (15) In the case of Sitapur particularly, the teacher strength is rather low and as a result the student-teacher ratio is quite adverse. Not only is this adversely affecting the quality of teaching but is also leading to resentment among the teachers against the VEC that it is not doing anything for them. The VEC members say that they do not have the power to provide extra teachers. It is for

the Basic Shiksha Parishad to ensure that adequate number of teachers are provided in the schools and the misunderstanding between teachers and VEC members is removed.

- (16) Even the VEC members have pointed out in both the districts that while they take various decisions during the VEC meetings and the suggestions are forwarded to the office of the Basic Shiksha Parishad, these recommendations generally are left unattended. This leads to a feeling of helplessness among the VEC members and they ultimately become indifferent towards their duties and responsibilities. Since the very concept of the VEC has been conceived of to improve the quality of education the suggestions put forward by it must be discussed in detail and implemented if they are useful.
- (17) In order to provide an impetus to do good work there is a scheme at present to reward the efficiently functioning VECs. It would be far more appropriate to monitor the functioning of the VECs throughout the year rather than identifying good VECs once every year. For this the officials from the office of the BSA and DIET will have to shoulder greater responsibilities.
- (18) In the Basic Shiksha Parishad offices at the block level as well as at the district level, information related to various aspects of primary education are not being well maintained. A large amount of money is being provided to the BSA office for computerization of secondary information and for developing a data bank. However, the actual situation is far from satisfactory and we were unable to obtain all the information, which we sought.

In the absence of readily available data on a time series basis it becomes extremely difficult for the policy makers to size up the exact situation and draw up

suitable policies. In fact the data which was provided separately by the block office as well as from the BSA office had discrepancies in them. It is, therefore, essential that data must be maintained properly. The VEC can see to it that school level information duly compiled related to Bal Gadna, enrolments and dropouts, strength of teachers, etc. must be sent regularly to the BRC. The BRC will compile block level information and then pass it on to the districts where block-wise data for the entire district can be stored.

To sum up, therefore, we wish to add that the concept of the Village Education Committee is very useful because it comprises of people belonging to the village itself and they can assure people's participation very effectively if only they take adequate interest in this work. Our experience after a survey of 60 efficiently run VECs leads to the obvious conclusion that wherever even if one VEC member is active, it has produced the desired results. The situation becomes even more favourable if this individual is the Pradhan himself. This is so because he leads by example and exerts a positive influence on the others and they willingly extend their full cooperation to him. Our success stories are a pointer in this direction.

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